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Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to paragraphs 28 and 29 of General Assembly resolution 71/134. Section II contains information received from governments on the extent to which jurisdiction, in particular over crimes of a serious nature committed by their nationals while serving as United Nations officials or experts on mission, is established under their national laws. Section III provides information received from governments on the handling of credible allegations that reveal that a crime may have been committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission by States against whose nationals such allegations are made, and matters relating thereto. Section IV provides information on cooperation among States and with the United Nations in the exchange of information and the facilitation of investigations and prosecution of such individuals, as well as the protection of victims and witnesses in this process. Section V provides information on vetting by Member States contributing personnel to the United Nations. Section VI provides comments received from governments on the report of the Group of Legal Experts on ensuring the accountability of United Nations staff and experts on mission with respect to criminal acts committed in peacekeeping operations (A/60/980), including on the question of future action. Sections VII and VIII relate to information on activities within the Secretariat.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/134, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution, in particular with respect to paragraphs 9, 11, 12, 14, 17 and 19, as well as any practical problems in its implementation, on the basis of information received from governments and the Secretariat.

2. In a note verbale dated 16 January 2017, the Secretary-General drew the attention of all States to General Assembly resolution 71/134 and requested them to submit relevant information. The present report provides information on efforts undertaken in that regard. Replies have been received from the following States: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Finland, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

3. Sections II, III and IV of the present report concern activities and information received relating to the criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission, as required under paragraphs 9 to 11, 17, 18 and 24 of resolution 71/134. Section V provides information relating to paragraph 12 of the resolution. Section VI contains comments received with respect to paragraph 14 of the resolution, by which Member States were invited to submit further comments on the report of the Group of Legal Experts, including on the question of future action.

4. Sections VII and VIII relate to activities undertaken within the Secretariat in the implementation of paragraphs 3, 6, 12, 13, 17 to 22 and 29 of the resolution, focusing in particular on information regarding the bringing of credible allegations that reveal that a crime may have been committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission to the attention of the States against whose nationals such allegations are made, and matters relating thereto.

5. The present report should be read together with previous reports of the Secretary-General under this item.[1]

6. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General at the previous session (see A/71/167, para. 7), the focus of the report and the work of the Sixth Committee is but one aspect of the work of the Organization to address issues of accountability of United Nations actors, including the conduct of United Nations officials and experts on mission.

7. There are different reporting mechanisms that apply with respect to questions of accountability generally within the United Nations, which might bear on questions of criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission. As noted in the previous report of the Secretary-General (see A/71/167, para. 8), a number of other reports prepared pursuant to other mandates may be related to the present item. An indicative but not exhaustive list of relevant reports on this matter is available on the website of the Sixth Committee for the seventy-second session, under the agenda item "Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission".

8. Particular attention may be drawn to reports that contain related but often distinct sets of statistics with respect to allegations of misconduct against United Nations officials or experts on mission. Such reports may deal with disciplinary matters from a human resource management perspective; sexual exploitation and sexual abuse; and questions of general accountability.

9. The first series of such reports are reports of the Secretary-General on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/287, requesting that Member States be informed on an annual basis about all actions taken in cases of established misconduct and/or criminal behaviour and the

[1] A/71/167, A/70/208, A/69/210, A/68/173, A/67/213, A/66/174 and Add.1, A/65/185, A/64/183 and Add.1, and A/63/260 and Add.1.

disciplinary action and, where appropriate, legal action taken in accordance with the established procedures and regulations. The most recent such report (A/71/186) covers the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.

10. The second series of reports are reports of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, prepared annually. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 57/306 and 70/286, the Secretary-General, in his most recent such report (A/71/818 and Add.1) presented a strategy to improve the system-wide approach of the Organization to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse. The strategy focuses on four main areas of action: putting victims first; ending impunity; engaging civil society and external partners; and improving strategic communications for education and transparency. The report also provided data on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse across the United Nations system and by non-United Nations international forces authorized by a Security Council mandate. The data cover the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016. Specifically, the following data are provided in annex IV to the report: (a) the nature of allegations reported for peacekeeping operations and special political missions, for entities other than peacekeeping and special political missions and for non-United Nations forces, in 2016; (b) the status of investigations related to allegations reported for peacekeeping operations and special political missions, for entities other than peacekeeping and special political missions and for non-United Nations forces, in 2016; (c) the allegations reported to the Office of Internal Oversight Services for peacekeeping operations and special political missions, allegations reported to the Office of Human Resources Management by entities other than peacekeeping and special political missions, and allegations reported to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in 2016; (d) an analysis of these allegations. In addition, a system-wide matrix of responsibilities to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse, disaggregated into respective matrices for prevention and response, is provided in annex V to the report.

11. Finally, there is a series of reports on the accountability system in the Secretariat. These include the sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat (A/71/729), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/255, and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/71/820) in consideration of the report of the Secretary-General, which provide information and analysis on progress made towards the implementation of the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat. The report highlights several critical components that have been strengthened over the past year in areas related to internal controls, including: progress made in the implementation of the enterprise risk management framework; the finalization of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat; progress made in the implementation of a statement on internal control, in internal controls in the procurement process and in accountability in field missions; and improvements related to ethics and integrity and in the performance assessment of the Secretariat's personnel. The report also describes how the major transformational projects implemented in recent years continue to increase the visibility of crucial information in the area of common support services, and how that can foster better management and stronger accountability. It may be noted in this regard that an information circular was released containing the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat (ST/IC/2016/25). The objective of the Framework is to assist the Secretariat in promoting a culture of integrity and honesty within the Organization by providing guidance and information to staff members and other Secretariat personnel on how the Secretariat acts to prevent, detect, deter, respond to and report on fraud and corruption.

12. Different United Nations bodies, based on their respective mandates, bear responsibility in the preparation of these reports and have reporting obligations to the relevant legislative bodies. It may be noted, for instance that, pursuant to their

respective mandates, a number of offices provide information to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Committee) that is relevant to aspects of accountability. These units and offices include the Office of Human Resources Management, Department of Field Support, Ethics Office, Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and Joint Inspection Unit.

13. The Department of Field Support, with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, provide information within their respective mandates on aspects of accountability to the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee), and in particular to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. These departments have also provided key information on field operations to the Security Council, as appropriate.

14. In addition, the Secretary-General continues to provide information and assessment into aspects of the means to address the criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission. Information has been provided to the Sixth Committee through the report of the Secretary-General from the Office of Legal Affairs, OIOS and the Department of Field Support, as set out in sections VI and VII of the present report. The informal briefings by the Secretariat, as set out in paragraphs 15 and 16 of resolution 71/134, have provided a further opportunity for the provision of information and the discussion on measures that could be taken to help ensure the accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission and prevent future crimes, and have included officials from the Office of Legal Affairs, OIOS, Department of Field Support, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

II. Establishment of jurisdiction over crimes of a serious nature

Austria

15. Austria reiterated the information provided in previous submissions (see A/63/260, para. 7). Austria further indicated that section 64, paragraph 1, sub-paragraph 4(c), of the Austrian Penal Code provides for full complementary jurisdiction of Austrian courts over international crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, in particular genocide (section 321), crimes against humanity (section 321a), war crimes (sections 321b to 321f) and crime of aggression (section 321k). Accordingly, Austrian courts can exercise jurisdiction over these crimes committed in foreign countries in all cases, regardless of locally applicable law, in which the perpetrator or the victim is an Austrian national, other Austrian national interests are infringed by the act, or the perpetrator is a foreigner who has his habitual residence in Austria or is present in Austria and cannot be extradited.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

16. Under article III (b) of the Constitution, general principles of international law, including that of *pacta sunt servanda*, shall be an integral part of the law of the State. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that it had no specific legislation that regulated matters of criminal liability of United Nations officials and experts on mission, but that the criminal legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina applied to its nationals under a number of jurisdictional grounds.

17. Under territorial jurisdiction, Bosnia and Herzegovina could apply its criminal law to anyone committing a criminal offence inside its territory. Bosnia and Herzegovina noted the exception to this application as provided by diplomatic immunity. In such cases, the right of punishment would be transferred to the State where the alleged foreign offender has permanent residency.

18. Bosnia and Herzegovina indicated that a number of potential extraterritorial jurisdictional grounds for addressing criminal conduct of its nationals exist under its

legislation. These include the protective principle, by which criminal law extends to certain crimes committed outside its territory that threaten its important values or assets, regardless of whether the perpetrator is a national, a foreigner or a stateless person. There is no requirement for dual criminality with the State where the crime was committed, and the principle of *non bis in idem* is derogated from, provided that the sentence served or part thereof is credited against the sentence imposed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, nationality (or active personality) jurisdiction applies only to offences committed abroad by Bosnian nationals, excluding those offences covered by the protective principle. A requirement is that the national is located within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina or is extradited there.

19. Bosnia and Herzegovina noted that it was a party to the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. Bosnia and Herzegovina also drew attention to the Agreement Between the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Concerning the Status of NATO and its Personnel. As per paragraph 2 of the Agreement, the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations that relate to experts on mission apply mutatis mutandis to NATO personnel involved in the operation, unless otherwise provided in the Agreement.

20. Bosnia and Herzegovina further added that there were no special military courts, martial law or legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina affirmed that, within the limits permitted by the international treaties Bosnia and Herzegovina is subject to, its criminal legislation applied to United Nations officials and experts on mission.

El Salvador

21. El Salvador reiterated information contained in previous reports (see A/65/185, para. 17, A/67/213, para. 4, A/69/210, para. 7 and A/71/167, para. 13).

New Zealand

22. New Zealand provides for broad jurisdiction over nationals who commit offences while serving overseas as United Nations officials or experts on mission in peacekeeping or police operations with the authorization of the Government of New Zealand. However, where a person is working for the United Nations in his or her own capacity, coverage is more limited to specific serious crimes. New Zealand was also considering whether it was necessary to establish extraterritorial jurisdiction over the commission of additional serious crimes, but noted the practical and jurisdictional difficulties of establishing extraterritorial jurisdiction over New Zealand nationals serving the United Nations abroad in their individual or personal capacity. New Zealand has no legislation that specifically provides for criminal jurisdiction to be taken over New Zealand nationals serving as United Nations officials or experts on mission in their personal capacity without the authorization of the Government of New Zealand. These individuals are, however, still subject to New Zealand law to the extent that it provides for extraterritorial jurisdiction for certain offences.

23. New Zealand provided updated information from their previous submission (see A/63/260, paras. 26 and 27), affirming that it already extends jurisdiction, as provided for under existing legislation, over its nationals who commit specific "serious crimes" while serving as United Nations officials, under the Adoption Act 1955, the Aviation Crimes Act 1972, the Armed Forces Discipline Act 1971, the Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act 1996, the Crimes (Internationally Protected Persons, United Nations and Associated Personnel, and Hostages) Act 1980, the Crimes of Torture Act 1989, the Electoral Act 1993, the Films, Videos and Publications Classification Act 1993, the Geneva Conventions Act 1958, the International Crimes and International Criminal Court Act 2000, the Maritime Crimes Act 1999, the Mercenary Activities (Prohibition) Act 2004, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975, the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms

Control Act 1987, the Nuclear-Test-Ban Act 1999 (not yet in force), the Policing Act 2008, the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea Act 1996. The crimes include terrorism offences, genocide, piracy, torture, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions or First Protocol, and other war crimes, certain sexual offences and sexual exploitation of children, human trafficking, and bribery and corruption.

24. The Policing Act 2008 provides for jurisdiction over members of the New Zealand Police forming part of a United Nations force. Section 91 of the Act provides that "employee means a Police employee who is an employee for the purposes of United Nations activity". "For the purposes of this section, a Police employee is deemed to be an employee for the purposes of a United Nations activity from the time he or she leaves New Zealand to undertake duties with the United Nations until he or she returns to New Zealand or earlier ceases to be an employee." Section 92 of the Act provides that "an employee who commits a crime outside New Zealand is liable to be proceeded against and punished as if it had occurred in New Zealand and the courts of New Zealand have jurisdiction accordingly".

25. In addition, sections 86 to 90 of the Policing Act 2008 apply the same New Zealand criminal jurisdiction to crimes committed overseas to any person who is not a member of the armed forces and not already covered by the Policing Act 2008, and is serving as part of an "overseas operation" outside New Zealand. An "overseas operation" is defined under the Act as "a person or group of people that" "is authorized by the Government of New Zealand to participate in duties overseas involving peacekeeping, the maintenance or restoration of law and order or functioning government institutions, or any other activity in respect of which the Government of New Zealand wishes to provide assistance (whether or not in conjunction with personnel from one or more other countries)".

Switzerland

26. Switzerland reiterated information provided for previous reports of the Secretary-General on the topic (see A/63/260, para. 33; A/66/174, paras. 19-21; A/67/213, paras. 10-13; and A/71/167, paras. 22 to 23).

III. Handling of credible allegations that reveal that a crime may have been committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission by States against whose nationals such allegations are made, and matters relating thereto

El Salvador

27. El Salvador provided updated information (see A/71/167, para. 29) that its armed forces had no record of any Salvadoran personnel who had committed serious crimes during participation in a peacekeeping mission, and reaffirmed the legal duty to carry out an investigation and exercise its jurisdiction for credible allegations that would be brought to its attention.

Finland

28. Finland provided an updated report that no crimes of a serious nature committed by Finnish nationals while serving as United Nations officials or experts on mission had been brought to the attention of the Finnish authorities (see A/71/167, para. 30).

New Zealand

29. New Zealand reported that it was not aware of any current allegations, investigations or prosecutions being undertaken in relation to a New Zealand national committing a serious crime while working as a United Nations official or expert on mission.

IV. Cooperation between States and with the United Nations in the exchange of information and the facilitation of investigations and prosecutions, and protection of victims and witnesses in this process

Austria

30. Austria reiterated information provided in its previous submission (see A/64/183, paras. 30 to 36).

New Zealand

31. New Zealand reiterated information provided in its previous submission with respect to cooperation between States and with the United Nations in the exchange of information and the facilitation of investigations and prosecutions (see A/63/260, para. 50). With respect to the protection of victims and witnesses, the Victims' Rights Act 2002 ensures that if victims have suffered harm as a result of an offence they are treated with courtesy and they have their dignity and privacy respected. It provides that victims should have access to welfare, health, counselling, medical or legal services. It ensures that victims have the right to be heard on matters related to the offender and the offence, kept informed of any investigation and notified of the offender's progress through the criminal justice system. Furthermore, New Zealand drew attention to its Evidence Act 2006 that also provides for privacy protection of witnesses before a trial if the offence is serious in nature and if the safety of the witness or any other person is endangered, or if there is likely to be serious damage to the witnesses' property, and if withholding the witnesses' identity until the trial would not be contrary to justice.

32. New Zealand reported that it had not been requested to assist a host State in investigating a crime of a serious nature alleged to have been committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission. New Zealand did however provide some general capacity-building support through the New Zealand Aid Programme police support programme, which included enhancing investigation techniques. New Zealand provided police support throughout the Pacific and had provided police capacity-building support in a number of post-conflict and fragile contexts including in Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

Switzerland

33. Switzerland reiterated the information provided in its previous submission (see A/71/167, paras. 43 and 44).

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

34. The United Kingdom provided information on national laws and policies in place in the three United Kingdom criminal law jurisdictions (England and Wales; Northern Ireland; and Scotland) relating to the effective protection of victims and witnesses who provide information in relation to crimes of a serious nature committed by any individual.[2] Further information was provided on the laws in Scotland with respect to the protection of vulnerable witnesses.

[2] See www.cps.gov.uk/legal/v_to_z/witness_protection_and_anonymity/ (England and Wales); www.ppsni.gov.uk/Code-for-Prosecutors-5017.html (Northern Ireland); www.ppsni.gov.uk/Victims-and-Witnesses-5016.html (Northern Ireland); www.crownoffice.gov.uk/publications/victims-and-witnesses (Scotland).

V. Vetting by Member States contributing personnel to the United Nations

New Zealand

35. New Zealand noted that personnel deployed to work as United Nations officials or experts on mission where the New Zealand Government has authorized the deployment of personnel through peacekeeping, police or other operations were personnel usually deployed by the New Zealand Police or the New Zealand Defence Force, both of which have robust internal vetting processes and strict codes of conduct by which all personnel are required to abide. Where a New Zealander is working for the United Nations in his or her own capacity, there is more limited ability for New Zealand to influence the individual's conduct or behaviour.

VI. Report of the Group of Legal Experts, including on the question of future action

Switzerland

36. Switzerland reiterated the viewpoints presented in its previous submission (see A/71/167, para. 46), and further drew attention to the mandate it had provided to the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law to examine the legislation of a representative list of States and to establish the presence of any gaps in their legal basis for prosecuting the perpetrators of the criminal offences in question. Switzerland will present the results of this study during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

VII. Bringing credible allegations that reveal that a crime may have been committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission to the attention of the States against whose nationals such allegations are made, and matters relating thereto

37. In paragraphs 17 to 23 and 25 to 29 of its resolution 71/134, the General Assembly urged Member States to provide information to the Secretary-General, requested the Secretary-General to provide certain information to the Assembly and requested the United Nations to take certain measures concerning the issue of criminal accountability of officials and experts on mission.

Criminal conduct of personnel deployed in field missions

38. The Secretary-General continued to expect that any criminal conduct by United Nations staff members, or other categories of personnel deployed in field missions, would be prosecuted in a manner consistent with the gravity of the offence. That was particularly the case in instances of sexual abuse that amounted to crimes under the laws of host or sending States. Such instances would include non-consensual sexual activities and sexual activities with minors. During the reporting period, the Department of Field Support referred to the Office of Legal Affairs instances of possible criminal offences involving eight staff members, including one instance of sexual abuse of a minor. Furthermore, the Department of Field Support also cooperated with the Office of Legal Affairs in reviewing investigation reports to be referred to Member States for criminal accountability purposes, in connection with eight more instances involving possible criminal offences (see paras. 40 and 41).

39. The latest report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/71/818) reiterated prior system-wide initiatives on the need for United Nations personnel to be held accountable for

criminal offences. The Secretary-General again urged Member States to conclude the long-standing discussions on the adoption of an international convention on the issue. The Secretary-General also indicated that information would be sought from Member States regarding amendments to their administrative rules, regulations or codes governing police and military contingents to clearly recognize all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse as misconduct, where that was not already the case, and to indicate that such acts would attract the harshest available sanctions. The Department of Field Support, in cooperation with the Office of Legal Affairs, was in the process of finalizing guidance for field missions on procedures to be followed in instances of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, that could amount to criminal conduct to be referred to the judicial authorities of host States, in accordance with the existing legal framework.

40. As observed in the 2016 report of the Secretary-General on criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission (A/71/167), peacekeeping missions continued to report, on a quarterly basis, on cooperation with host States regarding the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences committed by United Nations personnel, where applicable.

Referrals in relation to officials or experts on mission during the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017

41. The request in paragraph 17 of resolution 71/134 is similar to those made by the General Assembly in paragraph 15 of its resolution 70/114 (see A/71/167, covering the 2015/16 period), and paragraph 9 of its resolutions 69/114 (see A/70/208, covering the 2014/15 period), 68/105 (see A/69/210, covering the 2013/14 period), 67/88 (see A/68/173, covering the 2012/13 period), 66/93 (see A/67/213, covering the 2011/12 period), 65/20 (see A/66/174, covering the 2010/11 period), 64/110 (see A/65/185, covering the 2009/10 period), 63/119 (see A/64/183, covering the 2008/09 period) and 62/63 (see A/63/260, covering the 2007/08 period).

42. During the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, the Office of Legal Affairs referred to States of nationality, through the permanent missions concerned, 35 cases involving 38 United Nations officials and experts on mission for investigation and possible prosecution. Of those cases, 10 concerned allegations of corruption and fraud; 1 concerned allegations of theft, corruption and fraud; 19 concerned allegations of entitlement fraud; 1 concerned allegations of physical assault; 2 concerned allegations of sexual exploitation and/or abuse; and 2 concerned allegations of theft. Additional details regarding those cases, as required by paragraph 29 of resolution 71/134, are contained in annex I to the present report (see numbers 90-124).

Updates from States on the status of their efforts to investigate and, as appropriate, prosecute cases, as well as assistance requested from the Secretariat

43. In accordance with paragraph 19 of resolution 71/134, the Secretariat requested the States to which cases were referred to keep the United Nations informed of any action taken by national authorities in relation to such cases and followed up on cases in which it did not receive a response from the Member State concerned. As of the date of preparation of the present report, the Secretariat had been contacted by States to which referrals were made during the reporting period with respect to the cases of 11 officials or experts on mission, noting that such cases had been raised with the relevant authorities. In six of those cases, the States concerned also requested specific assistance from the United Nations. The Secretariat remains ready to assist on all referrals made.

Information on the nature of the allegations and information received from States on all referrals since 1 July 2007

44. Annex I of the present report contains credible allegations that have been referred to States of nationality pursuant to resolution 62/63 and subsequent resolutions on the criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission. It also contains information and updates received from States in response to such referrals since 1 July 2007 and specific categories of information relating to the credible allegations referred. In addition, annex I contains the dates of follow-up requests sent by the Secretariat to such States, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 29 of resolution 71/134.

Notifications received from States with respect to investigations or prosecutions of crimes allegedly committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission

45. In paragraph 18 of its resolution 71/134, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek, from all States that have notified the United Nations with respect to investigations or prosecutions of crimes allegedly committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission, updates on the status of their investigations or prosecutions, provided that this would not prejudice national investigations or national proceedings. In accordance with paragraphs 18 and 29 of resolution 71/134, annex II provides information on 27 investigations or prosecutions concerning United Nations officials or experts on mission of which the Organization was notified during the reporting period, and as to which the State concerned did not object to their inclusion in the present report.

Possible use by States exercising jurisdiction of information from United Nations investigations

46. In paragraph 20 of its resolution 71/134, the General Assembly requested the United Nations, when its investigations into allegations suggest that crimes of a serious nature may have been committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission, to consider any appropriate measures that may facilitate the possible use of information and material for purposes of criminal proceedings initiated by States, bearing in mind due process considerations. In the same vein, in paragraph 22 of that resolution, the Assembly urged the United Nations to continue cooperating with States exercising jurisdiction in order to provide them, within the framework of the relevant rules of international law and agreements governing activities of the United Nations, with information and material for purposes of criminal proceedings initiated by States.

47. In that regard, it is important to recall that the legal framework within which the referrals are made by the United Nations and the role of the Secretary-General have been outlined in a previous report of the Secretary-General on criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission (see A/63/260, sect. IV).

48. The United Nations cooperates with law enforcement and judicial authorities of relevant Member States in accordance with its rights and obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly on 13 February 1946, as well as other relevant international agreements and applicable legal principles. Accordingly, the Organization will disclose documents and/or information and waive immunity on a case-by-case basis where, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, immunity would impede the course of justice and can be waived without prejudice to the interests of the United Nations. Consequently, information obtained by the United Nations may be provided to the relevant authorities and documents may be shared, subject to considerations of confidentiality and privileges and immunities. Documents may be redacted where necessary. It should be noted that, since the United Nations does not have any criminal investigative or prosecutorial jurisdiction, the use of any documents of information provided by the United

Nations, including their admissibility in any legal proceedings, is a matter for determination by the relevant judicial authorities to whom such documents or information have been provided.

Protection of United Nations officials and experts on mission from retaliation

49. For information responding to paragraphs 21 and 23 of resolution 71/134, the situation remains the same as reported in prior reports of the Secretary-General (see A/70/208, paras. 34 and 35).

VIII. Practical measures to strengthen existing predeployment training and vetting measures

50. With support from conduct and discipline personnel based in field missions, all United Nations personnel deployed in peacekeeping and special political missions continue to receive training and be sensitized concerning their obligation to respect the United Nations standards of conduct, including the obligation for all United Nations personnel to observe the laws of the host State, as well as possible consequences in terms of accountability should they fail to observe such laws. Training programmes on this topic include predeployment and induction training. In addition, a dedicated e-learning programme on sexual exploitation and abuse was launched at the end of 2016, and its completion made mandatory for all personnel. This was initially available on an internal platform for United Nations staff members and is now available through the United Nations System Staff College portal, for all personnel deployed with the United Nations other than United Nations staff members. Governments are also asked to certify that they have provided predeployment training on conduct and discipline, including on sexual exploitation and abuse, to military and police contingents personnel deploying to United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

51. The Department of Field Support has continued to work with other components in the Secretariat of the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes on implementing mechanisms to ensure system-wide sharing of information on vetting processes. All personnel deployed in peacekeeping and special political missions are vetted against records of misconduct during prior deployments in such field missions.

52. As a mean of strengthening transparency and raising awareness, during the reporting period, the Department of Field Support launched a new website providing information on the conduct and discipline function, the United Nations standards of conduct, and procedures in place to address misconduct, including in instances in which such misconduct may also amount to crimes under national laws. The site has three core goals: increasing understanding of the conduct and discipline function; increasing knowledge of the activities related to conduct and discipline; and increasing transparency and clarity in the presentation of data. Innovative approaches taken by field missions in terms of activities related to conduct and discipline are highlighted. The website also enables misconduct to be reported directly through the site, by means of an online form.

Annex I

Additional information on the nature of the allegations and information received from States on all referrals since 1 July 2007

Number	*Referral year*	*Reporting period*[a]	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime(s)*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?*[b]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*	*Follow-up date(s)*
1	2008	2007-2008	UNMIL	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged rape of a minor	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
2	2008	2007-2008	UNOPS	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged procurement fraud through the execution of a bid-rigging scheme	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
3	2008	2007-2008	UNMIS	Sexual abuse	Alleged rape and physical assault of an adult	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
4	2009	2008-2009	UNMIT	Vehicular crime	Alleged driving while intoxicated resulting in one injury and one death	Investigation was initiated by Member State. No further information was received	Yes	No information received from Member State	None
5	2009	2008-2009	UNOCI	Counterfeiting	Alleged knowing possession of counterfeit currency and making of verbal threats	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
6	2009	2008-2009	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement by using a fraudulent check to withdraw funds from a United Nations bank account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
7	2009	2008-2009	UNFPA	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent disbursement of salary payments to a private account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
8	2009	2008-2009	UNOPS	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement and fraudulent use of funds designated for donor-funded projects	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
9	2009	2009-2010	MONUC	Smuggling	Alleged illicit purchase and smuggling of uncut diamonds	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
10	2010	2009-2010	Secretariat	Theft/firearms violation	Alleged theft of a United Nations firearm and violation of a firearms possession law	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
11	2010	2009-2010	Secretariat	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for United Nations rental subsidy allowances	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	2 March 2012
12	2010	2009-2010	UNIFEM	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement through the fraudulent diversion of United Nations project assets to private accounts	Investigation and prosecution of non-United Nations personnel connected to case initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
13	2010	2009-2010	Secretariat	Entitlement fraud/visa fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent applications for visas and dependency entitlements	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	6 December 2011 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
14	2010	2010-2011	MONUC	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual exploitation and abuse of a minor	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	2 March 2012
15	2010	2010-2011	UNDP	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
16	2010	2010-2011	UNOCI	Physical assault/ firearms violation	Alleged physical assault and unlawful brandishing of a firearm	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	None
17	2010	2010-2011	UNMIT	Theft/fraud	Alleged fraudulent transfer of funds to a private account using wire transfer	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	14 October 2011
18	2010	2010-2011	MINUSTAH	Sexual exploitation and abuse/physical assault	Alleged sexual exploitation and abuse of a minor; alleged physical assault of a minor	Disciplined by Member State's police. Criminal case was dismissed by national authorities	No	No information received from Member State	14 October 2011

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
19	2010	2010-2011	UNFPA	Theft	Alleged theft of United Nations fuel	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	14 October 2011
20	2011	2010-2011	UNDP	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
21	2011	2010-2011	UNMIL	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation and acceptance of bribery payments	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	14 October 2011
22	2011	2011-2012	UNAMI	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent claims for reimbursement of education expenses	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 January 2012
23	2011	2011-2012	UNOCI	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent fuel invoices	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	24 July 2012
24	2012	2011-2012	UNICEF	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the forgery of fraudulent payment vouchers	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	24 July 2012
25	2012	2011-2012	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged acceptance of bribery payments and manipulation of a procurement process	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	26 June 2012

Number	*Referral year*	*Reporting period*[a]	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime(s)*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?*[b]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*	*Follow-up date(s)*
26	2012	2011-2012	UNICEF	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent disbursement of salary payments	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	17 December 2012
27	2012	2011-2012	MINUSTAH	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations dental insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	19 December 2012 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
28	2012	2011-2012	MINUSTAH	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations dental insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	19 December 2012 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
29	2012	2011-2012	MINUSTAH	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations dental insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	19 December 2012 Response received from Member State acknowledging

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[a]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
									receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
30	2012	2011-2012	MINUSTAH	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations dental insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	19 December 2012 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
31	2012	2011-2012	WFP[b]	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent disbursement of salary payments	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	20 December 2012
32	2012	2012-2013	MINUSTAH	Distribution of child pornography	Alleged distribution of pornographic images of a minor using a United Nations computer and email account	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State.	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
33	2012	2012-2013	UNEP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent diversion of vendor payments	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations fully recovered its losses

Number	*Referral year*	*Reporting period*[a]	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime(s)*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned*[b]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*	*Follow-up date(s)*
34	2012	2012-2013	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent disbursement of payments to private accounts	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	7 January 2013
35	2012	2012-2013	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent disbursement of payments to private accounts	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	7 January 2013
36	2012	2012-2013	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent disbursement of payments to private accounts	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	7 January 2013
37	2012	2012-2013	MINUSTAH	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation and acceptance of bribery payments from individuals seeking United Nations employment	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
38	2013	2012-2013	UNMIK	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent claims to the United Nations for reimbursement of education expenses	Member State considered matter and confirmed it would not pursue it	No	No information received from Member State	18 April 2013
39	2013	2012-2013	UNDP	Physical assault	Alleged physical assault of an adult	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	18 April 2013
40	2013	2012-2013	UNRWA	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged procurement fraud and receipt of bribery payments	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	18 April 2013
41	2013	2013-2014	Secretariat	Attempted solicitation of minors	Attempted solicitation of minors using United Nations information technology and communication resources	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	Feedback received from Member State
42	2013	2013-2014	UNEP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged fraudulent solicitation and diversion of donor funds to a private company	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	21 August 2014
43	2013	2013-2014	UNMIL	Theft	Alleged theft of United Nations tires	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	15 January 2014

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[c]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
44	2013	2013-2014	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement through the fraudulent disbursement of UNDP assets to a private account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	4 April 2014 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
45	2013	2013-2014	UNSOA	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement through the fraudulent disbursement of United Nations assets to a private account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	21 August 2014
46	2014	2013-2014	UNEP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged fraudulent solicitation and diversion of donor funds to a private company	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	21 August 2014
47	2014	2013-2014	Secretariat	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds by forging documents to direct expenditure payments to private accounts	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	21 August 2014
48	2014	2013-2014	UNEP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation and receipt of undue financial and other benefits from donors	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	21 August 2014

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
49	2014	2013-2014	UNDP	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	10 September 2014
50	2014	2013-2014	UNOCI	Distribution of child pornography	Alleged distribution of pornographic images of a minor using a United Nations computer and email account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 October 2014
51	2014	2013-2014	UNOCI	Distribution of child pornography	Alleged distribution of pornographic images of a minor using a United Nations computer and email account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 October 2014
52	2014	2013-2014	UNOCI	Distribution of child pornography	Alleged distribution of pornographic images of a minor using a United Nations computer and email account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 October 2014
53	2014	2013-2014	UNOCI	Distribution of child pornography	Alleged distribution of pornographic images of a minor using a United Nations computer and email account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 October 2014

Number	*Referral year*	*Reporting period*[a]	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime(s)*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?*[b]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*	*Follow-up date(s)*
54	2014	2014-2015	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation of bribery payments in exchange for confidential information	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
55	2014	2014-2015	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation of bribery payments from United Nations partners	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
56	2014	2014-2015	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement through the fraudulent diversion of UNDP assets to a private account	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
57	2014	2014-2015	UNMISS	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged procurement fraud by posing as a United Nations procurement officer	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	16 December 2014
58	2014	2014-2015	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds by cashing fraudulent checks and preparing irregular financial transactions	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	28 June 2017

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
59	2014	2014-2015	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement through the fraudulent diversion of United Nations funds to a private account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	8 September 2015
60	2014	2014-2015	UNOPS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	23 March 2015
61	2014	2014-2015	MINUSTAH	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent claims to the United Nations for reimbursement of education expenses	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations fully recovered its losses
62	2015	2014-2015	MONUSCO	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged rape of a minor	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	13 May 2015
63	2015	2014-2015	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds the fraudulent endorsement and cashing of checks payable to staff members	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
64	2015	2014-2015	UNMISS	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent disbursement of salary payments	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	2 June 2015
65	2015	2014-2015	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	4 June 2015
66	2015	2014-2015	UNOCI	Distribution of child pornography	Alleged distribution of pornographic images of a minor using a United Nations computer and email account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	18 February 2016
67	2015	2014-2015	UNOCI	Distribution of child pornography	Alleged distribution of pornographic images of a minor using a United Nations computer and email account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	17 February 2016
68	2015	2014-2015	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds through the fraudulent withdrawal of vendor-designated assets	Criminal proceedings initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
69	2015	2014-2015	MONUSCO	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual exploitation and abuse of a minor	Criminal proceedings initiated by Member State. Disciplinary action resulted in sanction of reduction in rank. United Nations informed Member State that it does not consider sanction commensurate with act	No	No information received from Member State	14 June 2016
70	2015	2014-2015	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement by using a fraudulent check to withdraw funds from a United Nations bank account	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
71	2015	2015-2016	UNFPA	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged procurement fraud by providing confidential information to a potential vendor	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	17 February 2016 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
72	2015	2015-2016	UNDP	Corruption	Alleged solicitation of illicit payments from UNDP vendors	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	13 June 2016

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
73	2015	2015-2016	UNSOA	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation and acceptance of bribery payments	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	14 January 2016 20 May 2016 28 December 2016
74	2015	2015-2016	MONUSCO	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged procurement fraud by forging and presenting fraudulent purchase orders to potential vendors	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	18 February 2016 16 May 2016 21 November 2016
75	2015	2015-2016	Secretariat	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged embezzlement of United Nations funds by generating fraudulent payments to private accounts	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	17 February 2016 13 June 2016 1 February 2017
76	2015	2015-2016	UNAMID	Sexual exploitation and abuse/ physical assault	Alleged sexual and physical assault of an adult	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	23 February 2016 28 September 2016 30 January 2017
77	2015	2015-2016	UNMIL	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual exploitation and abuse of a minor	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	24 March 2016 28 September 2016 1 January 2017

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
78	2016	2015-2016	Secretariat	Corruption/ fraud/sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged solicitation and acceptance of bribery payments and soliciting sexual favours; alleged sexual assault of an adult	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	20 April 2016 4 August 2016 1 February 2017
79	2016	2015-2016	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation and acceptance of bribery payments	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	20 April 2016 4 August 2016 1 February 2017
80	2016	2015-2016	UNEP	Physical assault	Alleged physical assault of an adult	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
81	2016	2015-2016	UNMIL	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	13 June 2016 28 September 2016 23 March 2017
82	2016	2015-2016	UNAMID	Physical assault	Alleged physical assault of an adult	National authorities aware of allegations	No	No information received from Member State	13 June 2016 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
83	2016	2015-2016	UNDP	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	8 July 2016 21 November 2016 28 February 2017
84	2016	2015-2016	MINUSTAH	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation and acceptance of bribery payments	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
85	2016	2015-2016	Secretariat	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
86	2016	2015-2016	MINUSTAH	Theft	Alleged theft of United Nations fuel	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	4 August 2016 28 December 2016 27 April 2017 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
87	2016	2015-2016	UNMIL	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	28 September 2016 28 December 2016
88	2016	2015-2016	Secretariat	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation and acceptance of bribery payments from an individual seeking United Nations employment	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	21 November 2016 28 February 2017
89	2016	2015-2016	Secretariat	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual abuse of an adult	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
90	2016	2016-2017	UNMIL	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	21 November 2016 28 February 2017
91	2016	2016-2017	MINUSTAH	Theft	Alleged theft of prefabricated buildings	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	21 November 2016 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information

Number	*Referral year*	*Reporting period*[a]	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime(s)*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned*[25]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*	*Follow-up date(s)*
92	2016	2016-2017	UNOCI	Corruption/ fraud and theft	Alleged solicitation of bribes from individuals seeking United Nations employment; alleged use of fraudulent passes to steal buckets of paint	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	28 December 2016 23 March 2017
93	2016	2016-2017	Secretariat	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent documents in support of claims for education grant	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	28 December 2016 23 March 2017
94	2016	2016-2017	UNDP	Entitlement fraud	Alleged entitlements fraud, misrepresentation, forgery and false certification and misuse of UNDP resources	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	1 February 2017 31 May 2017
95	2016	2016-2017	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	1 February 2017 31 May 2017
96	2016	2016-2017	UNMISS	Theft	Alleged theft of United Nations air conditioning units	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	1 February 2017 31 May 2017

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned[b]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
97	2016	2016-2017	UNIMSS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	1 February 2017 31 May 2017
98	2016	2016-2017	MONUSCO	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged fraudulent solicitation of funds for visas; alleged fraudulent misrepresentation of authority to sell United Nations vehicle	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	28 February 2017 31 May 2017
99	2016	2016-2017	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged fraudulent acquisition and use of a diplomatic identity card to purchase a personal vehicle in Pakistan	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	28 February 2017 31 May 2017
100	2016	2016-2017	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged fraudulent acquisition and use of a diplomatic identity card to purchase a personal vehicle in Pakistan	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	28 February 2017 31 May 2017
101	2016	2016-2017	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged fraudulent request and receipt of cash payments from a bank in connection with UNHCR currency conversion transactions	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	28 February 2017 31 May 2017

Number	*Referral year*	*Reporting period*[a]	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime(s)*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?*[b]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*	*Follow-up date(s)*
102	2016	2016-2017	MONUSCO	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	23 March 2017
103	2016	2016-2017	UNFPA	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged collusion with two companies to submit fraudulent procurement documents and manipulate the award of UNFPA contracts	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	23 March 2017
104	2016	2016-2017	OHCHR	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
105	2017	2016-2017	Secretariat	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent claims for reimbursement of education expenses	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	26 April 2017 Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information

Number	*Referral year*	*Reporting period*[a]	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime(s)*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?*[c]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*	*Follow-up date(s)*
106	2017	2016-2017	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	27 April 2017
107	2017	2016-2017	UNOG	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
108	2017	2016-2017	UN-Women	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of forged documents in support of an entitlement claim	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
109	2017	2016-2017	UNDP	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual abuse of adults	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
110	2017	2016-2017	MONUSCO	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged fraudulent fabrication of United Nations documents to purchase vehicle batteries, tires and stationery	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	31 May 2017
111	2017	2016-2017	MONUSCO	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual abuse of a minor	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	31 May 2017

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned[25]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
112	2017	2016-2017	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged fraud and corruption connected to the issuance of humanitarian services to refugees	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
113	2017	2016-2017	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged solicitation of illicit payments from UNDP vendors	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	31 May 2017
114	2017	2016-2017	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed
115	2017	2016-2017	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed
116	2017	2016-2017	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed
117	2017	2016-2017	UNAMA	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent claims for reimbursement of education expenses	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed

Number	Referral year	Reporting period[a]	United Nations entity	Type of crime(s)	Summary of allegations	Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action	Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?[c]	Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution	Follow-up date(s)
118	2017	2016-2017	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed
119	2017	2016-2017	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed
120	2017	2016-2017	UNMISS	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed
121	2017	2016-2017	MINUSTAH	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	Response received from Member State acknowledging receipt of referral and/or seeking further information
122	2017	2016-2017	UNON	Assault	Alleged assault of an individual and threats with service firearm	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed

Number	*Referral year*	*Reporting period*[a]	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime(s)*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial/disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned?*[b,c]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*	*Follow-up date(s)*
123	2017	2016-2017	UNDP	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged theft and embezzlement of United Nations funds	Investigation initiated by Member State	No	No information received from Member State	United Nations informed of action taken by Member State
124	2017	2016-2017	UNHCR	Corruption/ fraud	Alleged submission of fraudulent travel invoices and embezzlement of funds	No information received from Member State	No	No information received from Member State	3 months from referral date not yet lapsed

Abbreviations: MINUSTAH, United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti; MONUC, United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; MONUSCO, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; OHCHR, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; UNAMA, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; UNAMI, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq; UNAMID, African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; UNIFEM, United Nations Development Fund for Women; UNMIK, United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo; UNMIL, United Nations Mission in Liberia; UNMIS, United Nations Mission in the Sudan; UNMISS, United Nations Mission in South Sudan; UNMIT, United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste; UNOCI, United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire; UNOG, United Nations Office at Geneva; UNON, United Nations Office at Nairobi; UNOPS, United Nations Office for Project Services; UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; UNSOA, United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; WFP, World Food Programme.

[a] Reporting periods run from 1 July through 30 June.

[b] In consultation with the World Food Programme.

[c] A formal determination of whether immunities apply in any given case is undertaken after a request for a waiver has been received from the Member State concerned. For information on United Nations practice in this regard, please refer to the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/63/331.

Annex II

Notifications received from States with respect to investigations or prosecutions of crimes allegedly committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission since 1 July 2016

Number[a]	*Reporting period*	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial, or disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned*[b]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*
1	2016-2017	UN-Habitat	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual exploitation and abuse of minors	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
2	2016-2017	ICTR	Death threat	Alleged written death threats	Case ongoing	No	No information received
3	2016-2017	UNOG	Entitlement fraud	Alleged submission of false claims for medical reimbursement to a United Nations health insurance provider	Case ongoing	No	No information received
4	2016-2017	MINUSCA/UNIFIL	Unknown	Unknown	Case ongoing	No	No information received
5	2016-2017	MINUSTAH	Theft /gang activities/firearms violation	Alleged association with gang involved in the theft of vehicles, and violation of a firearms possession law	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
6	2016-2017	MONUSCO	Fraud	Alleged fraudulent sale of property and issuance of bounced cheques	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
7	2016-2017	MONUSCO	Trafficking of endangered species	Alleged trafficking of endangered species (ivory)	Convicted and sentenced	Yes	No information received

Number[a]	*Reporting period*	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial, or disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned*[b]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*
8	2016-2017	United Nations Mission in Colombia	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual harassment of adult who rejected solicitation of sexual favours	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
9	2016-2017	United Nations Mission in Colombia	Threat of physical assault	Alleged threats made against adult upon termination of their relationship	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
10	2016-2017	UNIOGBIS	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual assault and rape of minor	Case ongoing	No	No information received
11	2016-2017	UNMIL	Theft/fraud	Alleged theft of monies and fraud arising out of non-payment of debts	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
12	2016-2017	UNMIL	Non-payment of debt	Alleged non-payment of maintenance and child support	Claim dropped by complainant	No	No information received
13	2016-2017	UNMIL	Non-payment of debt	Alleged paternity dispute and non-payment of maintenance and child support	No information received	No	No information received
14	2016-2017	UNMIL	Non-payment of debt	Alleged non-payment of maintenance and child support	No information received	No	No information received
15	2016-2017	UNMISS	Sedition	Alleged subversive activities involving the provision of support to opposition forces	Charges dropped	No	No information received
16	2016-2017	UNMISS	Vehicular crime	Alleged road traffic accident	Case ongoing	No	No information received

Number[a]	*Reporting period*	*United Nations entity*	*Type of crime*	*Summary of allegations*	*Information received on status of investigation, prosecutorial, or disciplinary action*	*Request for waiver of immunity of the individual(s) concerned*[b]	*Information received on jurisdictional or evidentiary obstacles to prosecution*
17	2016-2017	UNMISS	Adultery	Alleged extramarital affair	Fine paid	No	No information received
18	2016-2017	UNAMA	Vehicular crime	Alleged road traffic accident resulting in vehicular manslaughter	Convicted and sentenced	No	No information received
19	2016-2017	Department of Safety and Security	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual abuse of minor	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
20	2016-2017	MICT	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged sexual abuse of minors	Case ongoing	No	No information received
21	2016-2017	UNFCCC	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Alleged rape of an adult	Convicted and sentenced	No	No information received
22	2016-2017	UNOG	Vehicular crime	Alleged speeding	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
23	2016-2017	OCHA	Vehicular crime	Alleged failure to respect pedestrian right of way and driving without a proper license	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
24	2016-2017	UNITAR	Vehicular crime	Alleged failure to respect right of way at intersection	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
25	2016-2017	UNICEF	Vehicular crime	Alleged speeding	Case ongoing	Yes	No information received
26	2016-2017	UNIFIL	Drug crime	Alleged use of illegal drugs	Investigation closed	No	No information received
27	2016-2017	UNIFIL	Fraud/forgery	Alleged fraudulent use of a forged government document	Case ongoing	No	No information received

Abbreviations: ICTR, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; MICT, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals; MINUSCA, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; MINUSTAH, United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti; MONUSCO, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; OCHA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; UNAMA, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNFCCC, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; UN-Habitat, United Nations Human Settlements Programme; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; UNIFIL, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; UNIOGBIS, United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau; UNITAR, United Nations Institute for Training and Research; UNMIL, United Nations Mission in Liberia; UNMISS, United Nations Mission in South Sudan; UNOG, United Nations Office at Geneva; UNON, United Nations Office at Nairobi; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

[a] Notifications were received in regards to additional cases that Member States did not wish included in this report.

[b] A formal determination of whether immunities apply in any given case is undertaken after a request for a waiver has been received from the Member State concerned. For information on United Nations practice in this regard, please refer to the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/63/331.

United Nations A/72/206

General Assembly

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Seventy-second session
Item 100 (bb) of the provisional agenda*
General and complete disarmament: taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

Report of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 71/258 of 23 December 2016, the General Assembly decided to convene in New York, under the rules of procedure of the General Assembly unless otherwise agreed by the conference, a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, from 27 to 31 March and from 15 June to 7 July 2017, with the participation and contribution of international organizations and civil society representatives. In addition, the General Assembly decided that the conference would hold a one-day organizational session in New York, to be held as soon as possible after the adoption of the resolution. The organizational session was held on 16 February 2017.

II. Organizational matters and proceedings of the conference

A. Opening and duration of the conference

2. The United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, was convened at United Nations Headquarters on 16 February 2017, 27 to 31 March 2017, and 15 June to 7 July 2017. The list of participants is contained in document A/CONF.229/2017/INF.4.

3. The conference was opened on 16 February 2017 by the Secretary-General of the conference and Director and Deputy to the High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Thomas Markram. At the same session, Elayne Whyte Gómez (Costa Rica) was elected President of the conference. The Acting President of the General Assembly, Masud Bin Momen (Bangladesh) and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Kim Won-soo, made statements at the opening of the conference.

* A/72/150.

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4. The conference held its organizational session on 16 February, during which two plenary meetings and one informal meeting were convened. At its first plenary meeting, the conference took decisions related to the agenda of its organizational session and of the March and June sessions of the conference (see paras. 6 and 7). The conference also took note of the draft indicative timetable for the meetings of its March session (A/CONF.229/2017/3). At the second meeting of its organizational session, the conference adopted a decision regarding the modalities and arrangements for participation by non-governmental organizations (A/CONF.229/2017/4).

B. Rules of procedure

5. At the 2nd meeting of the March session, on 27 March, the conference adopted its rules of procedure (A/CONF.229/2017/L.1), as orally revised, which was subsequently issued as document A/CONF.229/2017/5.

C. Agenda and organization of work

6. At the 1st meeting of its organizational session, on 16 February, the conference adopted the agenda of its organizational session (A/CONF.229/2017/1), as orally revised, as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Organizational matters:
   (a) Draft provisional agenda of the conference;
   (b) Draft proposed organization of work of the conference;
   (c) Draft provisional rules of procedure of the conference;
   (d) Credentials of representatives to the conference;
   (e) Arrangements for the accreditation and participation of international organizations, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and civil society representatives.
5. Preparations for the conference.
6. Other matters.
7. Closure of the session.

7. At the same meeting, the conference adopted the provisional agenda of the conference (A/CONF.229/2017/2) as follows, on the understanding that an additional sub-item might be added under item 11.

1. Opening of the conference.
2. Election of the President.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Adoption of the rules of procedure.
5. Organization of work.
6. Election of other officers.

7. Credentials of representatives to the conference:

   (a) Appointment of members of the Credentials Committee;

   (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.

8. General exchange of views:

   (a) High-level segment;

   (b) General exchange of views on all matters.

9. Negotiations, pursuant to paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 71/258 of 23 December 2016, on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

10. Other matters.

11. Adoption of the report of the conference.

12. Closure of the conference.

8. At its 10th, 11th, 20th and 23rd plenary meetings, on 31 March, 15 June, 23 June and 30 June, the conference considered the indicative timetable for meetings of the conference at its second substantive session, as proposed by the President (A/CONF.229/2017/3/Add.1 and Add.1/Rev.1, A/CONF.229/2017/3/Add.2 and A/CONF.229/2017/3/Add.3).

D. Officers

9. The composition of the Bureau of the conference was as follows:

President:
Elayne Whyte Gómez (Costa Rica)

Vice-Presidents:
Austria
Chile
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Morocco
New Zealand
South Africa

E. Documentation

10. The documents of the conference are listed in the annex to the present report.

III. Credentials

11. Pursuant to rule 4 of the rules of procedure of the conference (A/CONF.229/2017/5), according to which the Credentials Committee shall be composed of five members, the conference appointed Azerbaijan, Malawi, Paraguay, Sri Lanka and Sweden as members of its Credentials Committee.

12. At the 28th meeting of the conference, on 7 July, the Chair of the Credentials Committee introduced the report of the Committee (A/CONF.229/2017/7), in which the Committee reported that it had examined the credentials of the representatives of States participating in the conference and found them to be in order. The Chair also

informed the conference that, since the formal meeting of the Committee, credentials in the form required by rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the conference had been received from Haiti and that other information concerning the appointment of representatives of States to the conference had been received from Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Grenada, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. The conference adopted the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 14 of its report, and accepted the additional credentials mentioned by the Chair of the Credentials Committee.

IV. Consideration and adoption of the final documents of the conference and the report of the conference to the General Assembly

13. The conference held 29 plenary meetings from 27 to 31 March and 15 June to 7 July 2017,[1] at which it considered and negotiated the text of the legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination under agenda item 9.

14. At its 28th meeting, on 7 July, the conference adopted the text of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by 122 votes to 1, with 1 abstention (A/CONF.229/2017/8).[2] The Treaty will be open for signature to all States at United Nations Headquarters in New York as from 20 September 2017. After the vote, statements in explanation of vote were made by the representatives of El Salvador (on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), Lebanon (on behalf of the Arab Group), South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago (on behalf of the Caribbean Community), Cuba, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the State of Palestine, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, Malaysia, Peru, Argentina, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Holy See, Liechtenstein, Egypt, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Austria, Singapore, Guatemala, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines (also on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Thailand, Algeria, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Ireland and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

15. At its 29th meeting, on 7 July, the conference adopted its report to the General Assembly by consensus.

[1] The archived webcast of the plenary meetings is available at http://bit.ly/2t8XaNm.

[2] Subsequently, the delegation of Maldives informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.

Annex

Documentation

The conference had before it the following documents:

Symbol	*Title/description*
A/CONF.229/2017/1	Provisional agenda of the organizational session
A/CONF.229/2017/2	Provisional agenda of the conference
A/CONF.229/2017/3	Indicative timetable for the meetings of the conference (27-31 March)
A/CONF.229/2017/3/Add.1 and Rev.1	Indicative timetable for the meetings of the conference (15-23 June)
A/CONF.229/2017/3/Add.2	Indicative timetable for the meetings of the conference (26-30 June)
A/CONF.229/2017/3/Add.3	Indicative timetable for the meetings of the conference (3-7 July)
A/CONF.229/2017/4	Participation of non-governmental organizations in the conference
A/CONF.229/2017/5	Rules of procedure of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination
A/CONF.229/2017/6	Note verbale dated 20 June 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination
A/CONF.229/2017/7	Report of the Credentials Committee
A/CONF.229/2017/L.1	Provisional rules of procedure of the conference
A/CONF.229/2017/L.2	Draft report of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination
A/CONF.229/2017/L.3 and Rev.1	Draft treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, submitted by the President of the conference
A/CONF.229/2017/INF/1 and Corr.1	Information for participants: note by the Secretariat
A/CONF.229/2017/INF/2 and Add.1	Information for civil society representatives: note by the Secretariat
A/CONF.229/2017/INF/3	List of non-governmental organizations
A/CONF.229/2017/INF/4	List of participants
A/CONF.229/2017/CRP.1	Draft treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons

Symbol	*Title/description*
A/CONF.229/2017/CRP.2	Comments submitted by the International Committee of the Red Cross
A/CONF.229/2017/WP.1	Working paper submitted by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
A/CONF.229/2017/WP.2	Working paper submitted by the International Committee of the Red Cross
A/CONF.229/2017/WP.3	Working paper submitted by Colombia
A/CONF.229/2017/WP.4	Working paper submitted by Papua New Guinea
A/CONF.229/2017/WP.5	Working paper submitted by Sweden
A/CONF.229/2017/WP.6	Working paper submitted by Chile, Sweden and Uganda
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.1	Working paper submitted by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.2	Working paper submitted by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.3	Working paper submitted by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.4	Working paper submitted by Mayors for Peace
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.5	Working paper submitted by PAX
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.6	Working paper submitted by Basel Peace Office, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and Unfold Zero
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.7	Working paper submitted by Peace Depot
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.8	Working paper submitted by Soka Gakkai International
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.9	Working paper submitted by Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (Gensuikyo)
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.10	Working paper submitted by Article 36
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.11	Working paper submitted by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, World Medical Association, World Federation of Public Health Associations and, International Council of Nurses
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.12	Working paper submitted by International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.13	Working paper submitted by International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.14	Working paper submitted by International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.15	Working paper submitted by Mayors for Peace

Symbol	*Title/description*
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.16	Working paper submitted by Global Security Institute
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.17	Working paper submitted by Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.18	Working paper submitted by Arms Control Association
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.19	Working paper submitted by Peace Boat
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.20	Working paper submitted by DIYNGO
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.21	Working paper submitted by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.22	Working paper submitted by Pace University
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.23	Working paper submitted by Abolition des Armes Nucléaires — Maison de Vigilance
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.24	Working paper submitted by Mines Action Canada
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.25	Working paper submitted by Soka Gakkai International
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.26	Working paper submitted by Los Alamos Study Group
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.27	Working paper submitted by Los Alamos Study Group
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.28	Working paper submitted by Los Alamos Study Group
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.29	Working paper submitted by Los Alamos Study Group
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.30	Working paper submitted by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.31	Working paper submitted by Center for International Security and Policy
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.32	Working paper submitted by International Human Rights Clinic, Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.33	Working paper submitted by International Human Rights Clinic, Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.34	Working paper submitted by International Human Rights Clinic, Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.35	Working paper submitted by Abolition des Armes Nucléaires — Maison de Vigilance
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.36	Working paper submitted by Pace University
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.37	Working paper submitted by International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.38	Working paper submitted by International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.39	Working paper submitted by Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.40	Working paper submitted by PAX

Symbol	*Title/description*
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.41	Working paper submitted by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Italy) in collaboration with Disarmisti Esigenti
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.42	Working paper submitted by Peace Boat
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.43	Working paper submitted by Amplify Youth Network — Generation of Change
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.44	Working paper submitted by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Italy) in collaboration with Disarmisti Esigenti
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.45	Working paper submitted by Global Security Institute
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.46	Working paper submitted by Princeton University
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.47	Working paper submitted by International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.48	Working paper submitted by Action des citoyens pour le désarmement nucléaire
A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.49	Working paper submitted by Arms Control Association

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General Assembly

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Seventy-second session
Item 29 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Advancement of women

Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/132, the present report reviews the activities undertaken by Member States and United Nations entities to enable the well-being of women and girls in rural areas, especially the poorest and most marginalized. Gains in this area are essential for progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to ensure that no women or girls in rural areas are left behind in its implementation, monitoring and results achieved (see Assembly resolution 70/1). Recommendations are provided for consideration by the Assembly.

* A/72/150.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 70/132 on improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the implementation of the resolution at its seventy-second session. The present report provides an assessment of the situation of women and girls in rural areas since the seventieth session, emphasizing considerations that address both women and girls, given that the resolution highlighted girls in rural areas for the first time. It highlights the efforts of Member States, the United Nations system and other actors to address challenges facing women and girls in rural areas, especially the poorest and most marginalized, and to enable them to improve their lives and livelihoods through: (a) equal access to quality education; (b) quality, affordable and universally accessible health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights; (c) the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination; (d) access to sustainable and time- and labour-saving infrastructure and technology; (e) increased labour market participation and decent work, including for young women; and (f) the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics in rural areas. The report concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.[1]

2. The Beijing Platform for Action addresses rural women and girls across the 12 critical areas of concern.[2] In strategic objective F, on women in the economy, for example, attention is drawn to the promotion of women's economic rights and independence, and to key linkages between women's economic empowerment and women's voice, agency and decision-making in the private and public spheres. It highlights policies and strategies to improve the situation of rural women producers, increase their incomes and provide household food security. The 20-year review of the implementation of the Platform in 2015 brought renewed attention to the need to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the realization of women's and girls' empowerment and rights in rural areas (see E/CN.6/2015/3).

3. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women remains the only international human rights treaty with a specific article, article 14, on the situation of rural women, although all rights under the Convention apply to rural women.[3] It calls on States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against rural women in a number of areas. In its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, their rights to land and natural resources are emphasized and it is explicitly recommended that States uphold rural women's rights to health, education, employment, housing, water, sanitation, energy and participation.

4. Although general recommendation No. 34 focuses on rural women and girls in developing countries, it is also relevant for developed countries: rural communities

[1] A note verbale was circulated to all Member States and a letter was transmitted to United Nations entities soliciting contributions to the present report. Replies were received from 38 Member States (Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Switzerland, Togo and Turkey) and from 5 United Nations agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), whose contributions have been incorporated into the report.

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

in developed countries may be adequately connected to services and infrastructure for the most part, but there are disparities among them. It recognizes that rural women in both developing and developed countries grapple with poverty, economic and political exclusion, lack of access to services and social protection and the concomitant increases in domestic and care work, and rural development policies that overlook the priorities and rights of women. In particular, many women migrant workers in developed countries are employed in agriculture and often face serious human rights violations, including violence and exploitation, and are denied access to basic services. Widespread industrialized agriculture in many developed countries has marginalized small farmers, with a disproportionate impact on rural women farmers (see general recommendation No. 34).

5. Assessment of the situation of women and girls in rural areas must take into account evolving globalization, rapid technological and digital innovation, growing migration within and between countries, expanding urbanization, increasing climate change impacts, emerging humanitarian crises and political and violent conflicts, and greater demands for food. Poverty and undernourishment have been reduced globally but unevenly, while economic inequality in developed and developing countries has increased notably.[4] This global scenario may offer possibilities of new markets, expanded entrepreneurship and new livelihoods in the agrifood sector and beyond, but for individual rural women and men the risks and barriers remain significant.[5]

6. The crucial role that women and girls play in ensuring the sustainability of rural households and communities and improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being, has been increasingly recognized. Women account for a substantial proportion of the agricultural labour force, including that engaged in informal work, and perform the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work within families and households in rural areas. They make significant contributions to agricultural production, food security and nutrition, land and natural resource management and to building climate resilience.[6]

7. Even so, women and girls in rural areas suffer disproportionately from multidimensional poverty.[7] While extreme poverty has declined globally, the 1 billion people in the world who continue to live in unacceptable conditions of poverty are heavily concentrated in rural areas. Poverty rates in rural areas across most regions are higher than those in urban areas. Yet smallholder agriculture produces nearly 80 per cent of food in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and supports the livelihoods of some 2.5 billion people. Women farmers may be as productive and enterprising as their male counterparts, but are less able to access land, credit, agricultural inputs, markets and high-value agrifood chains, and obtain lower prices for their crops.[8]

8. Structural barriers and discriminatory social norms continue to constrain women's decision-making power and political participation in rural households and communities. Women and girls in rural areas lack equal access to productive resources and assets, public services, such as education and health care, and infrastructure, including water and sanitation, while much of their labour remains

[4] www.oecd.org/social/inequality.htm.

[5] IFAD, *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering Inclusive Rural Transformation* (Rome, 2016).

[6] UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (New York, 2015).

[7] Multidimensional poverty refers to the overlapping deprivations that poor women and men face in terms of health, education and standard of living. The 2014 Multidimensional Poverty Index, covering 105 countries, showed that 85 per cent of those living in multidimensional poverty live in rural areas.

[8] IFAD, *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering inclusive rural transformation*.

invisible and unpaid even as their workloads become increasingly heavy owing to the outmigration of men. Globally, with few exceptions, every gender and development indicator for which data are available reveals that rural women fare worse than rural men and urban women, and that they disproportionately experience poverty, exclusion and the effects of climate change.[9]

9. The gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, natural disasters and post-conflict situations can intensify existing gender inequalities in rural areas. Health risks and water and fuel scarcity related to climate-induced disasters add to the unpaid care and domestic work performed by women and girls. Women and girls are particularly affected by changes in the availability and quality of resources during and after conflict. It is increasingly evident, however, that rural women and girls are also at the forefront of building resilience and adapting to climate change, as well as contributing to post-conflict economic recovery.[10]

10. Rural women and girls are characterized by multiple and intersecting identities and inequalities; their circumstances vary according to, inter alia, location, income, age, race/ethnicity, culture and religion, violence and discrimination, disability status, migration status and refugee or internally-displaced person status. This complexity influences their decision-making power and exercise of voice and agency and defines their access to land, productive resources and household assets, as well as to food security and nutrition and education and health services. Specific groups, such as indigenous women, women heads of household or migrant women, may have particular needs and priorities, thus requiring policy and institutional responses that address this diversity with tailored approaches.

11. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development affirms the crucial importance of gender equality as both an integrated means and a goal of its implementation. With its interconnected and mutually dependent goals and targets, the 2030 Agenda represents a comprehensive and transformative agenda for rural development and the empowerment of rural women and girls. The 2030 Agenda states that Member States will devote resources to developing rural areas and sustainable agriculture and fisheries, supporting smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, herders and fishers in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries (General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 24). The implementation of the framework constitutes an unrivalled opportunity to achieve gender equality and realize the rights and empowerment of women and girls in rural areas.

II. Empowerment of women and girls in rural areas

A. Equal access to quality education

12. Educating women and girls is at the heart of sustainable development and gender equality, as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 4. Despite the gains made in achieving gender parity in primary school enrolment in developing countries, much remains to be done to reach universal primary completion. The ambition to achieve gender parity in school is offset by persistent gender-based discrimination and stereotypes in relation to textbooks, curricula, teaching methodologies, access to infrastructure, including information and communications technologies (ICT) and practices and behaviours within and outside educational

[9] FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture: Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security* (Rome, 2016), p. 49.

[10] UNEP, *Global Gender and Environment Outlook* (Nairobi, 2016).

settings, all of which tend to be more pronounced in rural areas.[11] Of particular concern with regard to rural girls is the persistent and widespread lack of qualified teachers in rural areas, especially in connection with the preparation, recruitment and retention of women teachers.[12]

13. The poorest girls are at the greatest risk of exclusion from school. In essence, poverty and location are the factors that determine whether girls go to school. Poor rural young women tend to be significantly less literate than the rural average; in the majority of countries with data, less than half of poor rural women have basic literacy skills. In Pakistan, the literacy rate for poor, young rural men is 64 per cent, compared with 15 per cent for their female counterparts.[13]

14. In lower-income countries, basic educational attainment is linked with increased incomes and better livelihoods among rural and informal sector workers. Poverty continues to be the main determinant of inequality in education. Among young people between the ages of 20 and 24 in 101 low- and middle-income countries, the poorest quintile averaged 5 years less schooling than the richest quintile, with a 2.6-year difference between those from rural and urban locations, and slightly more than a year's difference between women and men.[14] However, the multiple and intersecting identities and inequalities involving rural women and girls put them at the greatest disadvantage in terms of schooling, literacy and adult education. Indigenous women in Latin America are twice as likely to be illiterate as non-indigenous women. In Nigeria, over 90 per cent of adolescents from rich households were likely to complete lower secondary education, while only 17 per cent of poor rural young men and a mere 3 per cent of poor rural young women did so. In Brazil, 9 per cent of poor rural men complete lower secondary school, double the rate of their female counterparts.[15]

15. Member States have taken measures to achieve equal access to education for girls and women in rural areas and to address gender-based discrimination and stereotypes, for example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Greece and Turkey. Sri Lanka and Indonesia have established 12 years of free and compulsory education. As a result, in Sri Lanka gender parity has been virtually achieved with a participation rate in 2014 for girls of 98 per cent and that for boys slightly higher, at 98.8 per cent. In Indonesia, scholarships or conditional cash transfers are provided for students from poor families, which has kept both girls and boys in school with the additional benefit of reducing child labour. An education social welfare card guarantees all children and young people (aged 6-21), especially girls, access to education in various forms, be it public, religious or vocational.[16]

16. Various States have provided lifelong learning opportunities or second-chance education to rural women and girls. The Ministry of Education in Mongolia is encouraging women, including rural women, of all ages to enrol at "life-long

[11] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All* (Paris, 2016); UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016: Gender Review* (Paris, 2016).

[12] Jessica Gallo and Paula Beckman, eds., "A Global View of Rural Education: Issues, Challenges and Solutions Part II", *Global Education Review*, vol. 3, No. 1 (2016).

[13] UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. Gender Review* (Paris, 2016).

[14] UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. Education for People and Planet*.

[15] UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. Gender Review*.

[16] Conditional cash transfers should be designed to benefit both women and children. Some schemes may not empower women because they pose trade-offs between children's and women's needs and tend not to address gender and generational inequalities within the household. See Maxine Molyneux, "Conditional cash transfers: a pathway to women's empowerment?" Pathways working paper 5 (Brighton, United Kingdom, Pathways of Women's Empowerment, 2009).

education centres." Togo has created 7,500 literacy centres and 250 village libraries nationwide, with emphasis on rural areas, so that women can apply literacy in agricultural activities and daily life. In 2016, the Ministry of Women and the Family of Djibouti launched a literacy programme in national languages, targeting rural women and girls who have not had the chance to go to school.

17. Cultural and ethnic minorities are often marginalized in access to education in rural areas. The Slovak Republic concluded an innovative education project for primary school teachers, on "Intercultural Education in Elementary Schools with Pupils from Roma Communities". The Public Education Secretariat of Mexico prioritizes women and girls in rural areas, in particular those from indigenous groups. In 2014 and 2015, over 13,000 basic education scholarships were awarded to young indigenous women, in 2015 and 2016, over 1,000 to women speaking indigenous languages, and, in 2016, support went to over 277,000 women at university, including nearly 75,000 indigenous women. The Sudan aims to reduce gender disparity and increase the rate of girls' educational participation, with a focus on nomads and displaced persons.

18. Attention has also been paid to ensuring equality of opportunity for young women, including from rural areas, in tertiary education. Universities in Ethiopia provide meals and accommodation for all students. Support from Norway to the Universities of Mekele and Awassa covers basic essentials that poor, rural women students cannot afford. In the academic year 2016-2017, 1,338 women students, most from poor, rural, smallholder households, received such support.

19. Evidence shows that the provision of school meals can increase enrolment and reduce absenteeism, especially for girls. In 37 countries, the World Food Programme's home-grown school meals provide healthy, diversified and nutritious meals to children in schools, sourced locally from smallholders, including women, thereby encouraging farmers to produce quality food and increasing their market access.

B. Quality, affordable, universally accessible health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights

20. At least 1 billion people worldwide, especially in rural areas, do not have access to a qualified health professional.[17] Distance from health facilities is a serious cause for concern for rural women, particularly regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights. In the least developed countries, a rural woman is 38 per cent less likely than an urban woman to give birth with the assistance of a skilled health professional.[18] Maternal deaths, which are largely preventable as the necessary medical interventions are well known, are linked to inadequate health services for women, particularly for poorer women and women living in rural areas. In 2015, about 830 women died every day because of pregnancy or childbirth complications. The maternal mortality ratio was, per 100,000 live births, 239 in developing countries, 12 in developed countries, and 216 globally. Sustainable Development Goal target 3.1 calls for a reduction to fewer than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.

21. The lack of information and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights is particularly acute for rural women, especially young women. Globally, the unmet need for family planning affects the lives of 214 million women in

[17] UNESCO. *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016: Education for People and Planet.*

[18] UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (New York, 2015).

developing countries.[19] Combined with limited decision-making power, mobility and financial resources, early marriage and pregnancy have serious impacts on adolescent girls' educational and health outcomes.[20] In one recent survey of 1,381 young rural women (aged 15-24) in Jharkhand, India, the mean age of marriage was 15.7 years and 53 per cent had had their first child by the age of 17.[21]

22. Globally, AIDS remains a leading cause of death among women of reproductive age. In 2015, women represented 51 per cent of all people worldwide living with HIV and 59 per cent of those living in sub-Saharan Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa in 2015, young women and adolescent girls accounted for 66 per cent of new infections among young people. Globally, only 3 in 10 girls and young women aged 15-24 have comprehensive and accurate knowledge about HIV.[22] Owing to gender inequalities, rural women, especially young women, are more vulnerable to the risk of HIV.[23] Discriminatory laws and customary practices that limit or deny women's rights to land, property and inheritance place rural women at heightened risk of HIV infection and undermine their ability to seek care, cope with the consequences of illness and care for themselves and their families.[24] Those living with HIV depend on the unpaid care work of women and girl family members for support and care; in rural Nigeria, over 90 per cent of the care for those ill with HIV is provided by women, including girls of 10 years of age and above.[25]

23. Member States have made significant strides in addressing maternal and child health in rural areas. The Australian Nurse Family Partnership Programme is a nurse-led home visiting programme that supports women pregnant with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child to improve their and their babies' health. The Australian Government invests in a network of 140 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to deliver culturally appropriate comprehensive primary health care. In 2015 and 16, these services delivered approximately 3.9 million episodes of care, of which 26 per cent were in very remote and 18.2 per cent in remote locations. Mexico has a specific programme of action for maternal and perinatal health to improve the quality of obstetric care. In 2016, budgets were allocated to recruit indigenous language translators, in 16 indigenous languages, in hospitals for pregnant women. Informational materials on maternal and perinatal health and adolescent pregnancy were produced, targeting indigenous peoples. To address maternal mortality, the Ministry of Health of Peru has established birthing centres in collaboration with local communities and governments: 439 of the planned 459 centres had been established by 2016 in Amazonian and Andean rural areas.

[19] World Health Organization (WHO), Family Planning/contraception fact sheet 2017. Available from www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs351/en/.

[20] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "Ending child marriage: progress and prospects" (New York, 2014).

[21] Sushanta K. Banerjee and others, "How prepared are young, rural women in India to address their sexual and reproductive health needs? A cross-sectional assessment of youth in Jharkhand", *Reproductive Health*, vol. 12, No. 97 (2015).

[22] Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) AIDSInfo, available from http://aidsinfo.unaids.org; UNAIDS, "On the fast-track to end AIDS by 2030: focus on location and population" (2015).

[23] Sophie J. S. Pascoe and others, "Poverty, food insufficiency and HIV infection and sexual behaviour among young rural Zimbabwean women", *PLOS One*, vol. 10, No. 1 (January 27, 2015). Available from https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0115290.

[24] MEASURE Evaluation, "The links between women's property and inheritance rights and HIV in rural Tanzania" (March 2017). Available from https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/publications/fs-17-206/.

[25] Ekaete Francis Asuquo, Josephine B. Etowa and Margaret I. Akpan, "Assessing women caregiving role to people living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, West Africa", *SAGE Open*, January-March 2017, pp. 1-10.

24. Sri Lanka has free universal health care for all, including health services accessible to all women. Rural and urban disparities in delivery are minimal, reaching at least 98 per cent of both urban and rural women, and maternal mortality rates declined to 31 per 100,000 live births in 2013. In El Salvador, 21 maternity waiting homes were established, allowing timely access to hospital delivery for pregnant women in remote areas, and the Women's City (*Ciudad Mujer*) programme provides health services, including sexual and reproductive health, to rural women. In Cuba, maternity homes care for rural pregnant women in coordination with rural communities, guaranteeing delivery by specialized personnel and offering preventative treatment for nutritional disorders, low birth weight and reproductive, obstetric and perinatal risks. In Poland, as of 1 January 2016, social insurance for farmers covers maternity allowances and the current 52-week period has been extended to up to 71 weeks for multiple births or adoption.

25. States covering sexual and reproductive health in national health programmes and strategies to raise awareness and provide information include Argentina, Cambodia, El Salvador, Georgia, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland and Sri Lanka. According to the Cambodian Ministry of Health, the use of modern contraceptive methods increased from 19 per cent in 2000 to 38.8 per cent in 2014, with higher use among rural women than urban women. The family planning and contraception programme (2013-2018) in Mexico helps women and men to enjoy their sexual and reproductive lives in an informed, free, satisfactory, responsible and risk-free manner, while reducing unmet demand for contraceptive methods, especially among adolescent, indigenous and rural populations.

26. States are deploying mobile clinics to reach rural women. In Saudi Arabia, mobile clinics provide services, including early detection of breast cancer, to rural women in remote areas. In China, "Healthy Mother Express" mobile medical vehicles provide services to women and children in deprived areas. By the end of 2016, 2,470 vehicles were operating and had benefited 50 million people; 60 million rural women had undergone free cervical cancer screening and 80 million rural women had received free breast cancer screening. The National Women's Federation's Mothers from Deprived Areas Cervical and Breast Cancer Support Fund provided support for 71,396 women from rural areas suffering from these diseases.

27. Some countries employ telemedicine to reach rural women. The General System of Social Security for Health in Colombia guarantees quality, affordable and accessible health services to the entire population, including rural women. The country promotes telemedicine as a means of overcoming geographical access barriers in remote areas with dispersed populations. In 2015, Mongolia, with support from Luxembourg, implemented the Telemedicine Project, which provided 203 pregnant women in remote areas with expert consultations in their own communities, thereby avoiding the costly trip to the capital city. Skills of rural health-care professionals were upgraded through e-learning, including high-quality, up-to-date sexual and reproductive health care.

28. A number of Member States, including Cambodia, Colombia, Cyprus, El Salvador, Mexico, Romania and Sri Lanka, conduct national information campaigns on the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. It is acknowledged that comprehensive knowledge of the transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS needs to be strengthened among adolescents and young people, including in schools — such as the model for preventing HIV/AIDS through educational communities in El Salvador. Countries are targeting services to at-risk populations, including women in the sex industry and migrant women. In Mexico, universal free treatment coverage for HIV/AIDS has been achieved.

C. Elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination

29. Violence against women and girls is a significant issue in all countries. Over one-third of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner, or sexual violence by a non-partner, at some point in their lives; in most countries, less than 40 per cent sought help at any point.[26] Situations of heightened conflict, instability and migration have been marked by high levels of sexual and gender-based violence. Yet no current published global or regional data on violence against rural women exist. Only partial assessments can be made; for example, of the 46 countries with recent data on physical or sexual violence committed by a husband/partner in the last 12 months, 26 showed higher rates in rural than in urban areas.[27] Women and girls in rural areas may be at increased risk of violence because of structural causes — greater multidimensional poverty, legal and customary discrimination and lack of access to land, productive resources, decent work and social protection — as well as negative social norms and behaviours of men and boys. For rural women and girls who have suffered violence, services for survivors are not easily available and accessible in rural areas. In situations of domestic violence, for example, lack of childcare or employment opportunities can exacerbate rural women's lack of access to basic support services (see E/CN.6/2012/4).

30. The practices of child, early and forced marriage have declined globally, but some 15 million girls annually are married before they reach 18 years of age, many belonging to the poorest households in rural sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. Girls in rural areas are more likely to become child brides than their urban counterparts worldwide. In some countries in West and Central Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean, child marriage in rural areas is about twice the level in urban areas.[28] Similarly, female genital mutilation/cutting is still practised in at least 29 developing countries, affecting an estimated 200 million women and girls, 44 million under 15 years of age. In 19 of the 29 countries the practice is more common in rural areas. Of those aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about female genital mutilation/cutting, 67 per cent of women and girls and 63 per cent of men and boys think the practice should end.[29]

31. Member States, including Argentina, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Greece, Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, the Slovak Republic and Sri Lanka, have passed national legislation or launched national action plans, strategies or campaigns to combat violence against women. In Chad, on 12 December 2016, the National Assembly adopted the revised penal code, which includes provisions to reduce gender-based violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation.

32. States have taken measures to prevent, combat and respond to violence against rural women and girls. In Sri Lanka efforts to eliminate violence against women are concentrated in rural areas, where 60 per cent of incidents occur. Domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, incest, assault and forced prostitution are the most common offences reported. Six rural shelters were set up for survivors of violence and centres established in 40 major hospitals to provide medical care and counselling, with trained staff. In 2016, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia

[26] *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.XVII.8), chap. 6.

[27] UN-Women calculations based on data from the Demographic and Health Surveys programme STATcompiler. See http://www.statcompiler.com/en/ (accessed May 2017).

[28] UNICEF, "Ending child marriage: progress and prospects".

[29] UN-Women assessment. Available from https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation-and-cutting/ (accessed June 2017).

and Herzegovina introduced a budget for grants to non-governmental organizations to combat gender-based violence; in September 2016, in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Ministry launched a project to prevent and combat domestic violence against women in 10 local governments, including in rural areas. In Mexico, women's justice centres provide psychological, legal and medical care and temporary shelter; there are currently some 35 centres in 24 states, including in rural communities. Several initiatives promote a culture of non-violence in indigenous communities, given the degree of physical violence, sexual violence and discrimination that indigenous women face. Support for 189 projects against violence in rural areas benefited 32,557 people, of whom 20,892 were women. In Colombia, a national tour on challenging stereotypes of violence is an innovative violence prevention initiative using theatre and art to highlight everyday situations that have become normalized but actually constitute violence against women.

33. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed Guidance on the Prevention and Mitigation of Gender-based Violence to assist its staff and partners in designing and delivering food security and nutrition policies and actions that minimize risks to recipients, working with communities, particularly men and boys, to address practices that contribute to gender-based violence. FAO also brings men and women together to work on domestic violence, early marriage and HIV/AIDS. The Safe Access to Fuel and Energy approach is aimed at reducing the risk of violence to rural women and girls while collecting fuelwood. In some cases, women and girls who were victims of violence are no longer excluded from community life and have found the courage to report cases of rape and seek health advice; young girls have regained their dignity by going back to school. WFP school feeding programmes also provide a platform for conducting awareness-raising on gender equality and gender-based violence.

D. Access to sustainable infrastructure and technology

34. Infrastructure and technology tend to reach rural women and girls last, even if vital for relieving their disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and enhancing their economic opportunities. This situation is obscured by the lack of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics in key sectors, such as energy, water and sanitation and ICT. Global electrification reached 85.3 per cent in 2014 and close to universal access has been achieved in urban areas, at 96 per cent, while rural areas lag behind at 73 per cent of the population. This means that over 1 billion people still do not have access to electricity, the vast majority in rural areas, in particular rural sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. Global access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking reached 57.4 per cent in 2014; those lacking access to clean cooking are mainly in rural sub-Saharan Africa and Asia-Pacific.[30] Thus 3 billion people, mostly in rural and peri-urban areas, continue to rely on women and girls collecting solid fuels (i.e., wood, crop wastes, charcoal, coal or dung) and cooking over open fires and dirty stoves, exacerbating time and energy poverty and household air pollution. In 2012, exposure to such household air pollution caused 4.3 million deaths worldwide, 60 per cent of them women and children.[31]

35. Lack of clean water and safe sanitation also remain important causes of death, with an estimated 871,000 associated deaths in 2012, disproportionately in poor

[30] International Energy Agency, World Bank, "Sustainable Energy for All 2017: Global Tracking Framework — progress toward sustainable energy" (Summary) (Washington, D.C., 2017).

[31] WHO, *World Health Statistics 2017: monitoring health for the Sustainable Development Goals*.

communities and among children under 5 years of age. However, more than 90 per cent of the world's population has access to improved water sources (84.6 per cent in rural areas); nearly 68 per cent has improved sanitation (50.3 per cent in rural areas); and the proportion of people practising open defecation was down to 13 per cent in 2015. Those who lack improved water sources and sanitation facilities and practise open defecation are primarily in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. The poorest people in rural areas suffer most from lack of access to water, especially the women and girls who are responsible for collecting it. Rural women and girls are also disproportionately affected by the lack of clean, safe and private sanitation facilities. Monitoring under Sustainable Development Goal 6 on universal access to water and sanitation has changed from assessment of "improved/unimproved" water sources to "safely managed" water services.[32] Although 6.6 billion people had access to an improved drinking-water source in 2015, the availability of safely managed drinking-water remains low, with preliminary estimates of 68 per cent in urban areas and only 20 per cent in rural areas.[33]

36. Global connnectivity has been facilitated by the more than 7 billion mobile phone subscriptions, the 2.3 billion people with smartphones and some 3.2 billion people connected to the Internet, including 1.3 billion women users. Increased Internet connectivity and mobile phone access are credited with spurring women's entrepreneurship in many countries, including in rural areas. Even so, gender gaps exist: over 3 billion people in low- and middle-income countries do not own mobile phones, and 1.7 billion of them are women. Cost is the most important barrier to owning and using a mobile phone, particularly for women in rural areas of Southern Asia, East Asia and the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa. A worldwide gender gap of 12 per cent in Internet use was found in 2016, with a gap of 30.9 per cent in the least developed countries.[34] Even as mobile technology becomes prevalent, the digital divide is focused on the remaining 3.9 billion people who are offline — predominantly rural, poorer, less educated women and girls.[35]

37. Member States are making progress in supplying rural communities with the necessary infrastructure and technology to alleviate unpaid care and domestic work performed by women and girls. Argentina, Australia, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Egypt, Mexico, Poland and Sri Lanka are focusing on clean drinking water. In Sri Lanka, women are involved in planning and implementing 3,500 community-managed rural water supply schemes providing water to 3.5 million people; piped water is available in 44 per cent of rural areas. Cuba installed more than 3,000 aqueducts, windmills and water pumps, which guarantee chlorinated drinking water in 3,500 rural communities and provide employment for women. The "Water for All" project in Argentina reaches 371 Guaraní families, of which 171 are represented by women and 200 by men, to expand the water supply system for multiple use. Among rural women in Slovenia, Roma women are particularly

[32] Improved drinking water sources have the potential to deliver safe water. Safely managed drinking water should be accessible on premises, available when needed and free from contamination. See Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene, *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: 2017 Update and Sustainable Development Goal Baselines* (Geneva, WHO and UNICEF, 2017).

[33] WHO, *World Health Statistics 2017: Monitoring Health for the Sustainable Development Goals*; http://datatopics.worldbank.org/sdgatlas/SDG-06-clean-water-and-sanitation.html; Zachary Burt, Kara Nelson and Isha Ray, *Towards Gender Equality through Sanitation Access*, UN-Women discussion paper No. 12 (New York, 2016).

[34] ITU, *Measuring the Information Society Report 2016* (Geneva, 2016); GSMA, Connected Women, "Bridging the gender gap: mobile access and usage in low- and middle-income countries" (2015).

[35] ITU and UNESCO, *The State of Broadband 2016: Broadband Catalyzing Sustainable Development* (2016).

disadvantaged since many Roma families still live without electricity or running water: improving Roma housing conditions continues to be a national priority.

38. States are supporting sustainable energy for gender equality in rural areas. Norway is supporting Ethiopia to promote household renewable energy. Some 33,000 fuel-saving stoves have been distributed and 115,000 households (22,000 headed by women) are using climate-smart technology packages. FAO has distributed an estimated 41,000 fuel-efficient stoves and provided training on their production and use in Cameroon, Kenya, South Sudan and the Sudan, targeting women and girls. Sri Lanka aims to provide universal access to affordable, reliable, high-quality energy. In 2013, 78 per cent of households in Sri Lanka used firewood collected by women for cooking; therefore, the Ceylon Electricity Board introduced energy-efficient cooking stoves. Low-income families can access loans at 7 per cent interest to cover the costs of connecting to the grid, payable with their electricity bill over six years.

39. States are providing rural women with access to ICT. Sri Lanka is increasing digital literacy in school curricula and establishing e-libraries, resource centres and public access points in rural areas; women constitute two-thirds of public access point users. Australia has committed to the rollout of the National Broadband Network by 2020, improving access to high-speed broadband services across regional, rural and remote areas. The "Live Digital kiosk" programme in Colombia provides community Internet access points for children, youth and adults in remote, rural communities with more than 100 inhabitants. Nearly 7,000 kiosks provide rural women with basic ICT skills that they can apply in their work. In China, "Internet +" has increased the number of practical e-commerce education and training opportunities available to rural women. The International Telecommunication Union has developed training materials to promote rural women's ICT literacy, in partnership with the Asia Pacific Women's Information Network Center and with support from Australia.

E. Rural women's labour market participation

40. Women's employment in agriculture has declined over the most recent two decades, but it continues to be the most important source of employment for women in low-income and lower-middle-income countries. Globally, a quarter of all working women were involved in agriculture in 2015, comprising over 40 per cent of agricultural workers. In Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, over 60 per cent of all working women are in agriculture. By contrast, the share of women in agriculture is only 9.5 per cent in upper-middle-income countries and 2.6 per cent in high-income countries. In many developing economies, women are concentrated in time- and labour-intensive agricultural activities, which are unpaid or poorly paid. Both women and men have lower than average earnings in rural areas and, in absolute terms, rural women are at the bottom of the earnings ladder. Gender discrimination and occupational segregation perpetuate the gender wage gap and inhibit upward mobility for rural women workers and labour force entry for young women. The pay gap between men and women performing the same work in agriculture or rural employment can be as high as 40 per cent. Rural women workers face decent work deficits such as low-paid, unskilled, poor-quality jobs, lack of formal contracts, inadequate social protection, widespread underemployment, absence of the right to work and rights at work and constraints

on the right to organize. Labour legislation is often not enforced, and rural workers are the least organized and the least protected.[36]

41. Agricultural and rural non-farm employment and enterprises are both critical for rural development and the livelihoods of rural women workers of all ages. Rural women's enterprises and cooperatives need support to access markets, for example, to be suppliers for public and private procurement systems, school feeding programmes and other public or private services. Governments can help to create enabling environments for low-income self-employed rural women, small-scale farmers and rural women's enterprises and cooperatives by improving access to productive resources and financial services, including credit, procurement schemes, training and skills development and agricultural extension services. Governments can also increase labour and social protections for rural women workers, in particular younger and older women and those from marginalized and migrant communities.[37] For instance, Italy passed legislation in 2016 to protect migrant workers against illegal recruitment and labour exploitation in agriculture and to provide social protection and access to justice.

42. Several Member States support women's entrepreneurship in rural areas, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka and the Sudan. In the Russian Federation, women head a third of agricultural enterprises. In Georgia, a programme to support micro and small enterprises in regional areas has awarded 36 per cent of funded projects to women entrepreneurs since 2015. El Salvador, together with Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua, participates in the "Expanding Economic Opportunities for Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Latin America" programme, supported by UN-Women and the International Fund For Agricultural Development (IFAD). With support from the International Labour Organization (ILO), El Salvador also launched the "Decide to grow campaign: combating gender stereotypes in vocational training and employment." The Micro Enterprise Development Programme of the Government of Nepal is aimed at reducing poverty through entrepreneurship, employment and access to decision-making for rural women from poor, Dalit and indigenous communities.

43. Member States are promoting rural women's economic independence. Cuba reports an increasing number of women in agricultural cooperatives, with women holding most financial and management positions. Collective land rights have been granted to some 20,000 women, together with full access to credit and technical assistance, allowing women to manage their landholdings. The General Directorate for the Regulation and Development of the Banking System of Sudan has mandated that 30 per cent of resources allocated to rural areas should finance women. The agricultural extension network of Mozambique has offered assistance to producers in rural areas throughout the country, supporting 634,345 producers in 2016, of whom 308,686 are women, by way of 1,371 extension agents, of whom 227 are women. Qatar reports that women participate in all private and public employment in the country, since men and women have equal employment opportunities. The "Telework" programme of Saudi Arabia allows rural women to work from their regions. Mongolia is promoting employment, including for herders; women benefit from over 40 per cent of the jobs created. The Policy on Pension Reform

[36] ILO, *Women at Work: Trends 2016* (Geneva, 2016); Marzia Fontana and Cristina Paciello, *Gender Dimensions of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Differentiated Pathways out of Poverty — A Global Perspective* (Rome, 2010); IFAD, *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering inclusive rural transformation*; FAO, "Rural employment guidelines material #1: Guidance on how to address rural employment and decent work concerns in FAO country activities" (Rome, 2011).

[37] ILO, *Women at Work: Trends 2016*.

(2015-2030) allows women aged 50, who have worked for up to 20 years (of which 12.6 years as herdswomen) and paid pension insurance premiums, to qualify for old-age pensions.

44. FAO is working to strengthen the capacity of agricultural practitioners in member countries to understand and address discriminatory attitudes towards women in rural employment and support the realization of their rights. In March 2017, FAO published an e-learning module to improve stakeholders' understanding of gender disparities in rural labour markets and strengthen their abilities to implement employment strategies that boost rural women's access to decent jobs and increase their ability to profit from agricultural activities and enterprises.

F. Strengthening sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics

45. Significant gaps exist in the data and statistics available on rural women and girls across the themes covered in this report. Therefore, improving the collection, analysis, and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and gender in rural areas is critical in order to increase our collective understanding and address the key gaps and challenges that rural women and girls face.

46. Member States are taking steps to identify and address these gaps across sectors. In Jordan, the Department of Statistics has updated the national health sector database and is preparing comprehensive sex-disaggregated data documenting the improvement in the situation of women, including rural women, and their rights. In Sri Lanka, the Department of Census and Statistics is concerned that sex-disaggregated data covering land tenure, energy, water and sanitation are not available since records are kept in the husband's name as head of household. The State of the Filipino Women Report 2016 of the Philippines documents the status of land ownership and land holding by sex. In Argentina, the Ministry of Agro-industry through the Rural Change Unit incorporates sex-disaggregated data into all programme design and delivery. A study is being conducted in three provinces to obtain data for a gender analysis of rural property.

47. A number of countries are continuing to collect time-use data that will help to address the disproportionate share of unpaid domestic and care work performed by rural women and girls, among other issues. The National Survey on Time Use in 2014 collected information on specific activities in localities of fewer than 15,000 inhabitants, which can be categorized as rural. In 2017 in Mongolia, the National Statistical Office is collecting data on "Women's health and life experience" with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. In 2015, the third "time usage" survey was organized, and a pilot survey on measuring individual asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective was conducted, supported by UNFPA and the Asian Development Bank. In Switzerland, the census of agricultural enterprises collected sex-disaggregated data for the first time in 2013, including on management and ownership of the farm, training of the husband/wife of the farm manager, paid activities on- and off-farm, and social coverage for all persons over 15 years of age living on the farm.

48. FAO is providing guidance and standards for the collection of sex-disaggregated data in the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020. The "Voices of the Hungry" project uses a novel approach to collect nationally representative food insecurity data at the individual level, thus enabling disaggregation by sex of respondents. FAO is also developing guidelines on "Mainstreaming Sex-Disaggregated Data and Gender Indicators in Agricultural Statistics", to be released in 2017.

49. The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project is a joint initiative of the United Nations Statistics Division and UN-Women, together with national statistical offices, regional commissions and international agencies, that seeks to improve the integration of gender issues into the regular production of official statistics for better, evidence-based policies. The project is aimed at accelerating existing efforts to generate internationally comparable gender indicators on health, education, employment, entrepreneurship and asset ownership, including in rural areas.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

50. Member States and United Nations entities have implemented measures to improve the situation of women and girls in rural areas, expanding their access to quality education and health care, decent work and entrepreneurship and infrastructure and technology. They have also taken steps to eliminate violence and discrimination against rural women and girls and to strengthen the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on rural areas. Despite considerable progress in some respects, most women and girls in rural areas worldwide fare worse than rural men and urban women for every gender and development indicator for which there is data available. The challenges that rural women and girls face have been magnified by the pace and complexity of globalization, urbanization, migration and climate change, among other processes.

51. In the light of the multiple and intersecting identities of rural women and girls and the inequalities that they face, support for the full and equal participation of rural women in decision-making at all levels is necessary for the creation of more transparent and accountable institutions, improved and responsive governance and the realization of the rights of rural women and girls. This will entail greater coordination between national gender equality mechanisms and other governmental and non-governmental institutions and civil society organizations at all levels.

52. While countries are beginning to report progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, better targeted approaches and more focused investment across goals and targets will be necessary to ensure the inclusion of rural women and girls. Rural women and girls are central to achieving virtually all the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet they will be left behind if their needs, priorities and rights are not taken fully into account. In particular, more robust and more nuanced research and data are needed to understand and address the specificities of gender gaps and inequalities in rural areas and to support rural women and girls and their organizations to realize their rights and well-being.

53. Member States are encouraged to implement the following recommendations, presented for consideration by the General Assembly, to improve the situation of women and girls in rural areas:

(a) Take action on existing commitments to rural development and the realization of rural women's and girls' empowerment and human rights, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, taking note of general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and its 20-year global review (E/CN.6/2015/3), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development as an integrated framework that leaves no rural women or girls behind;

(b) Enact economic and social policies to eradicate poverty and support productive livelihoods in rural areas, paying particular attention to the needs of rural women and girls and the challenges that they face;

(c) Promote the full and equal participation of rural women and girls in rural development, governance and decision-making at all levels, by coordinating national gender equality mechanisms and other governmental and non-governmental institutions and civil society organizations at all levels;

(d) Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure full and equal participation and completion of quality education (primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and technical) for rural women and girls, including through quality teacher training, recruitment and retention, especially of women teachers in rural areas, and building gender-sensitive education facilities that provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all;

(e) Increase financial investments in quality, affordable and universally accessible health-care facilities, practitioners and support services for women and girls in rural areas, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights;

(f) Take measures to reduce maternal mortality rates in rural areas, and increase rural women's access to quality care before, during and after childbirth;

(g) Strengthen the prevention, treatment and care of infections such as HIV in rural areas, including by providing comprehensive and far-reaching information services and social care infrastructure to reduce the disproportionate share of care falling on rural women and girls;

(h) Accelerate efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence, discrimination and harmful practices against rural women and girls, including domestic violence and sexual violence, as well as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting;

(i) Ensure rural women's full and equal rights to land and inheritance, land tenure security, common property and common resources and equal access to justice and legal support, by designing, reforming and enforcing relevant laws and policies;

(j) Ensure equal access to decent work in agricultural and non-farm sectors, including in sustainable enterprises and cooperatives; design and implement gender-responsive social protection, including conditional cash transfers; and facilitate the entry of young rural women into the labour force by improving their skills and capacities through technical and vocational training;

(k) Make procurement laws and policies gender-responsive and build the capacities and skills of rural women and their enterprises and cooperatives to benefit from public and private sector procurement processes;

(l) Mitigate post-conflict situations and impacts of climate change by ensuring rural women's full participation and decision-making in natural resource governance and building climate resilience;

(m) Support rural women and girls, and women smallholder farmers in particular, by investing in time- and labour-saving infrastructure and

technology, including sustainable energy, clean water and safe sanitation and information and communications technologies;

(n) Increase the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate sex- and age-disaggregated data and produce gender statistics, including through agricultural censuses, to support policies and action to improve the situation of rural women and girls and monitor and track implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

54. The United Nations system and other international organizations, while supporting the empowerment of rural women and girls in their programmes and strategies, are encouraged to support Member States to implement, measure and monitor the foregoing recommendations at all levels.

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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Follow-up to the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on children

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report assesses the steps taken in 2016 to achieve a world fit for children, highlighting the gaps in achievement as well as the strategic shifts necessary to achieve the unmet goals.

The report has been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution S-27/2, adopted at the twenty-seventh special session in 2002, and resolutions 58/282 and 61/272, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report regularly on progress made in implementing the Plan of Action included in the annex to resolution S-27/2.

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I. Introduction

1. At the special session of the General Assembly on children, held in 2002, delegations from 190 countries adopted the document entitled "A world fit for children" (resolution S-27/2, annex), containing a Declaration and Plan of Action. In the document, Governments made a commitment to a time-bound set of goals for children and young people, with a particular focus on: (a) promoting healthy lives; (b) providing quality education; (c) protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence; and (d) combating HIV and AIDS. The present report provides the fifteenth update on progress made in follow-up to the special session.

2. In General Assembly resolution 65/1, Member States made a further commitment to accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Subsequently, during the high-level meeting held in 2014 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Member States, United Nations agencies and their partners made a commitment to work together to ensure that every child is given a fair chance in life.

3. The past year marked the first year of implementation of the wide-ranging global accords reached in 2015, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1); the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (resolution 69/283, annexes I and II); the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The year also witnessed the completion of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (see General Assembly resolution 71/243) and the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (Assembly resolution 71/1) and the New Urban Agenda (resolution 71/256, annex). Together with the commitments made at the first World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016, these accords provide key directions to realizing the rights of all children, everywhere, and to achieving the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a world where no child is left behind.

4. A child's chance to survive and thrive was much greater in 2016 than it was when the global community adopted the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. There continues to be clear evidence of significant progress made in child survival, nutrition and primary school enrolment and in reduction of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, among other areas. The absolute number of children dying before their fifth birthday has fallen by more than half, from 12.7 million in 1990 to about 5.9 million in 2015. The percentage of stunted children under 5 years of age has declined from 40 per cent in 1990 to 23 per cent in 2016. In 2016, wasting continued to threaten the lives of an estimated 8 per cent of children under 5, or nearly 52 million children globally, while 41 million, or 6 per cent, were overweight. Close to 7 million deaths from malaria were averted between 2001 and 2015, primarily among children under 5 years of age in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen by almost half in 15 years, from 106 million in 1999 to an estimated 61 million in 2014. In 2015, 91 per cent of the global population used an improved drinking water source, compared with 76 per cent in 1990.

5. However, persistent and in many cases growing inequalities continue, depriving the poorest and most excluded children of services to which they are entitled. In 2015, 2.4 billion people worldwide still lacked access to improved

sanitation facilities and 946 million continued to practise open defecation. An estimated 36.7 million people were living with HIV in 2015, approximately 1.8 million of whom were children younger than 15 years of age. The latest available survey data indicate that only 27 per cent of adolescent girls (age 15-19) and 32 per cent of adolescent boys (age 15-19) in sub-Saharan Africa have comprehensive knowledge of HIV. Regarding child marriage, the practice has slowly declined since the early 1990s, but the gap in global levels of child marriage between girls from the wealthiest and the poorest quintiles increased dramatically.

6. Humanitarian crises continued to rise in 2016,[1] with more than half a billion children — one out of every four children in the world — living in countries affected by conflict, natural disasters and epidemics by the end of the year.[2] In places such as Iraq, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, acute conflicts are devastating the lives of children. Many of these conflicts, as well as those in countries such as Afghanistan and Burundi, have spilled over borders and generated subregional refugee crises, giving rise to grave violations of children's rights. While these conflicts have intensified, natural disasters have grown more prevalent. The 2015-2016 El Niño phenomenon generated life-threatening drought conditions across southern Africa and elsewhere. The year 2016 also saw new outbreaks of diseases such as cholera, yellow fever and Zika, and the consequent health emergencies have taken a heavy toll on children.

7. United Nations entities focused humanitarian action on saving lives, protecting children and addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability to crises. Globally, nearly 29 million people benefited from access to safe water, including more than 1.2 million displaced people in Iraq, through the expansion of water, sanitation and hygiene service centres. Nearly 2.5 million children with severe acute malnutrition accessed therapeutic feeding programmes, including some 219,000 conflict-affected children in South Sudan who benefited from treatment. More than 24 million children from 6 months to 15 years of age received measles vaccination, including more than 650,000 children under 1 year old in Yemen. More than 34,000 HIV-positive pregnant women continued antiretroviral therapy, including some 3,000 women affected by the conflict in the Central African Republic. United Nations entities reached nearly 12 million school-age children with formal or non-formal education, including more than 3.1 million children in the Syrian Arab Republic who received textbooks, stationery and school supplies. Nearly 3 million children benefited from psychosocial support, including some 312,000 children in the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria).

8. In 2016, United Nations entities continued to strengthen the link between humanitarian action and development programming, while promoting social cohesion, including by increasing the use of cash-based programming, improving accountability to affected populations and investing in early preparedness, and strengthening resilience and risk-informed programming through a vast network of partners. This includes government, civil society and the private sector, within the broader humanitarian system. In 2016, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) conducted their first joint emergency response simulation to further strengthen capacity.

[1] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2017*, available from www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO_2017.pdf.

[2] "Nearly a quarter of the world's children live in conflict or disaster-stricken countries", UNICEF press release, 9 December 2016, available from www.unicef.org/media/media_93863.html.

II. Follow-up to the General Assembly special session on children

A. Planning for children

9. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) was adopted in September 2015 and will be implemented globally over several years leading up to 2030. All of the Sustainable Development Goals are relevant to the lives of children and, taken together, amount to a holistic approach to meeting the needs of children, protecting them from harm, securing their environments and realizing their rights.

10. In the 2030 Agenda, children and youth are also recognized as possessing the ability to act as agents for change in shaping and creating more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable societies, economies and environments. Member States furthermore acknowledge that children, by gaining awareness of the issues, including through education, and participating in follow-up and review processes, can influence behaviours and social norms among themselves, their households, their families and their communities.

11. In the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, investing in all children and youth is imperative for building the human capital required to turn demographic transitions into dividends that reduce poverty and generate prosperity. In adopting the Goals, Member States renewed their commitments to children in agreeing to a future where no child is left behind. Leaving no child behind requires reflecting the rights and well-being of all children — in particular of the poorest and most vulnerable — at the centre of global, national and local plans, resource allocations and monitoring frameworks.

12. Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity remains the central and ultimate mission of the 2030 Agenda. In order to accurately assess and address challenges facing millions of women, men and children in poverty, we must be able to count this least-documented segment of the world population. Improving national capacities and innovations in technology will be crucial in supporting adequate data collection, disaggregation, analysis and use, including participatory methods that enable all people to provide direct feedback on their lived experiences.

B. Promoting implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

13. As at 18 May 2017, 196 States parties had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF continues to advocate and provide technical assistance to States parties for the ratification of the Convention and its three Optional Protocols. In 2016, Brunei Darussalam, Guinea, Pakistan, and Samoa ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, bringing the total number of ratifications to 166. Two States — Samoa and the United Arab Emirates — ratified the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, bringing the total number of States parties to 173. Seven States — France, Georgia, Italy, Luxembourg, Peru, Samoa and Ukraine — ratified the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, bringing the total number of ratifications to 30 by the end of 2016.

14. In 2016, the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted two general comments. The first, general comment No. 19, on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights, identifies States parties' obligations and makes recommendations on how to realize all the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child through effective, efficient, equitable, transparent and

sustainable public budget decision-making. The second, general comment No. 20, on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, provides guidance to States on the measures necessary to ensure the realization of the rights of children during adolescence.

C. Collaborating with partners and leveraging resources for children

15. While the largest volume of resources for development is domestic, development aid reached a new peak of $142.6 billion in 2016, an increase of 8.9 per cent from 2015 after adjusting for exchange rates and inflation. Discounting for the rise in aid spent on refugees in donor countries, aid rose 7.1 per cent. Official development assistance from the 29 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) averaged 0.32 per cent of gross national income, up from 0.30 per cent in 2015; it has not been at this level since 2005. The value of total official development assistance has increased by 102 per cent in real terms since 2000. Despite this progress, country-to-country aid to the least developed countries fell by 3.9 per cent in real terms from 2015 and aid to Africa fell 0.5 per cent. Within 2016 official development assistance, contributions by Development Assistance Committee donors to multilateral organizations rose by nearly 10 per cent in real terms. The share of multilateral aid to bilateral aid is now roughly equal.[3]

16. Results for children were leveraged in 2016 through a number of partnerships. For example, for the first time ever, the World Bank Group, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) collaborated in a $200 million direct International Development Association allocation for an emergency health and nutrition programme in Yemen. By April 2017, the programme had provided 375,000 children and 132,000 women with micronutrients, reached 71,032 children with treatment for various illnesses, provided 16,526 women with maternal services and trained 220 community health volunteers.

17. Global programme partnerships continue to advance the promotion and protection of children's rights. For example, building upon lessons learned from the "No Lost Generation" initiative, organizations have been working to champion the cause of children's education in emergencies and protracted crises, notably through the Education Cannot Wait fund, created in 2016 to aid efforts to reach all crisis-affected children and youth with safe, free, quality education by 2030. In addition, during 2016, UNICEF scaled up collaboration with relevant European Union institutions to protect children along migration routes and advocated for children's priorities to be reflected in relevant European Union policies, legislation and programmes.

D. Monitoring progress

18. When Heads of State assembled for the World Summit for Children in 1990, they had very limited information upon which to base targets to promote the survival, protection and development of children. Since then, there has been a revolution in the collection and use of robust, high-quality data.

[3] OECD, "Development aid rises again in 2016 but flows to poorest countries dip", 11 April 2017 (www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-aid-rises-again-in-2016-but-flows-to-poorest-countries-dip.htm); "Development aid rises again in 2016", 11 April 2017 (www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/ODA-2016-detailed-summary.pdf).

19. Much of the recent progress on data for children has been spurred by the rapid expansion and innovation of international household surveys, such as the multiple indicator cluster survey, first used in 1995. In the 22 years since, over 300 such surveys have been undertaken in more than 100 countries, collecting data on a range of topics covering the situation of children and women. Data from the fifth round of these surveys, which commenced in 2013 and covered 42 countries, were used in the final assessment of the Millennium Development Goals and also formed the baselines for many of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. The sixth round of multiple indicator cluster surveys commenced in the last quarter of 2016 and covers almost half of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators that require data collection through household sample surveys.

20. Systems for real-time information collection and engagement continue to be scaled up. By May 2017, U-Report, the social messaging platform, had over 3.2 million users in 35 countries. It was used in Latin America and the Caribbean in response to the outbreak of the Zika virus, leading to the launch of the first virtual online Zika Information Centre in January 2017, providing life-saving information to households in affected areas. It is also in continuous use by governments and partners to create real-time information flows with young people. Open-source systems like T-Watoto in the United Republic of Tanzania and MobileVRS in Uganda have dramatically raised rates of birth registration. In Uganda, for example, the rate rose from 37 per cent in 2013 to 60 per cent by the end of 2014. The RapidPro mobile platform, live in 41 countries, continues to help to reduce maternal and childhood mortality, including in rural areas of Zambia, where mothers who are HIV-positive can now find out the status of their child in half the time it used to take.

E. Participation and self-expression of children

21. Supporting the participation of children in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programmes and policies forms an essential component of the 2030 Agenda. UNICEF has developed an adolescent and youth engagement framework to strengthen adolescent and youth engagement across its work, and has also coordinated advocacy with the first cohort of countries to undertake national reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, providing guidance on including the voices of adolescents in the reports.

22. Numerous United Nations entities have championed efforts to promote and support adolescent engagement more systematically at the country level, including through support to student associations and councils. In Nepal, for example, the training of 934 child clubs on how to influence the decision-making of local governmental bodies advanced the creative thinking and advocacy skills of participants. In Bangladesh, support to adolescent clubs led to programme interventions on menstrual hygiene management and sexual and reproductive health, reaching almost 150,000 girls, and convinced the Government to invest further resources for additional clubs.

23. Participation programmes have also supported the engagement of children in public budgeting in Argentina, for example, where over 34,000 children took part in participatory budgeting processes in 30 municipalities. Consequently, youth participatory budgeting has now been included as a priority goal in the agenda of the National Secretariat of Municipal Affairs. Further, the social impact programme in Montenegro supported adolescents in designing and managing 16 social-change projects with 12,800 peers and 14 local organizations to tackle issues such as nationalism-fuelled violence and lack of equipment for teaching science in schools.

24. Continued support has been provided to skills development for employability and entrepreneurship. For example in Kosovo (under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)), the "StartUp" initiative aims to prepare adolescents to become entrepreneurs, contribute to their economic empowerment and increase their access to and control of financial resources.

25. To promote the artistic, social and cultural participation of adolescents, support has been provided to the development of new platforms for adolescent self-expression, self-development and creative co-production. In Cuba, for example, 49,000 marginalized children and adolescents were given help to participate in cultural and social inclusion activities in several public institutions, including libraries, museums, theatres and community spaces. In Ethiopia, young people, in collaboration with religious and community leaders, have actively participated in large-scale community dialogue and social mobilization efforts, resulting in 20 districts publicly declaring the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting. In Madagascar, 550 young volunteers and peer educators were trained in the use of the communication for humanitarian action toolkit and engaged approximately 22,500 people in villages affected by floods on issues of sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and health through group theatre, quizzes and community radio.

26. Indicators that measure participation are being created and will form part of the adolescent country tracker developed by UNICEF and partners in 2016 for use by countries to monitor and track the development and participation of adolescents.

III. Progress in the four major goal areas of "A world fit for children"

A. Promoting healthy lives

27. As reported in 2015, the under-five mortality rate and the absolute number of under-five deaths per year have fallen by more than half since 1990. This means that an average of 19,000 young lives have been saved every day. The average annual rate of reduction in under-five mortality more than doubled, from 1.8 per cent in 1990 to 3.9 per cent in 2016. This has saved the lives of 122 million children below age 5 since 1990. The maternal mortality ratio declined less rapidly, but still substantially, decreasing from 385 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 216 in 2016.

28. Prior to birth, a mother can increase her child's chance of survival and good health by attending antenatal care consultations, being immunized against tetanus and avoiding smoking and use of alcohol. Yet, in 2016 only 58 per cent of pregnant women in developing countries had at least four antenatal care visits. Coverage of pregnant women with three doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine was higher, at 86 per cent. Further, the joint WHO-United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report, "Maternal death surveillance and response", indicates that 86 per cent of countries have adopted a policy on maternal deaths notification, yet only 46 per cent of countries have a functional mechanism to systematically report, review and respond to maternal deaths.

29. Despite progress, 16,000 children under 5 still die every day, and serious inequities persist, with four fifths of global under-five mortality concentrated in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the latter shouldering half of that burden. Within countries, children from the poorest households are 1.9 times as likely to die before the age of 5 as children from the richest households. The world faces the urgent challenges of reducing dramatically the 2.6 million stillbirths that occurred in 2015 and continuing to step up action to prevent the 45 per cent of deaths that occur

during the first 28 days of life among children under 5. At the same time, greater attention is needed to reduce the risks to children from conflict, displacement and forced migration, climate change and other aspects of fragility.

30. United Nations entities are focused on bringing high-impact preventive and curative health services to the most vulnerable children and strengthening health systems at all levels, particularly the community level, as a key means of promoting equity. In 2016, these entities continued to support the scaling up of high-impact health interventions such as skilled birth attendance, immunization and child health services in high-burden countries and communities. In 2016, the number of young lives saved by high-impact health interventions reached an estimated 48 million.

31. Support continues for integrated community case management as a proven means of improving treatment access for children living in hard-to-reach contexts and communities. Acknowledging the centrality of community health workers within this model, UNICEF trained 74,381 community health workers in 2016. To support these community health workers, United Nations entities worked with Governments and local partners to strengthen supply chains. As a result, for example, there were no stock-outs of oral rehydration salts in 126 countries.

32. Immunization remains a central component of efforts related to child survival and health. By the end of 2016, 120 countries had reached at least 90 per cent national coverage for measles and 126 countries for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis immunization for children under one year of age. Among 59 target countries, 41 had eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus by the end of 2016. A total of 138 Governments were supported in vaccinating 61 million children against measles and 58 million children against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. UNICEF remained the largest global supplier of vaccines, procuring 2.5 billion vaccine doses in 2016 for 95 countries and reaching 45 per cent of the world's children. In partnership with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF played a crucial role in shaping the global vaccine market, harnessing competitive market forces and halving the weighted average price of pentavalent vaccine. The vaccine, which protects against five child-killing diseases — including diphtheria, tetanus and hepatitis B — is projected to save the lives of nearly 6 million children by 2020.

33. Eradication of polio remains a global priority. In 2016, the smallest number of children in history were paralysed by the disease, with 37 cases occurring in small geographical areas of Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan. In 2016, over 17,000 community-based vaccinators were deployed to the highest-risk areas in Pakistan, resulting in the highest immunization coverage figures in those areas in the country's history, with the proportion of children missed in national campaigns falling from 25 per cent in 2014 to 5 per cent by the end of 2016. In response to the first detection of polio in two years in Nigeria, UNICEF, WHO and partners supported the Government of Nigeria in large-scale emergency immunization activities across the Lake Chad region, immunizing 116 million children, with special emphasis on children in high-risk areas.

34. Even though many of the risk factors can be prevented, the global disease burden from non-communicable diseases affecting children and adolescents is rapidly increasing. Globally, almost 25 million adolescents 13 to 15 years of age smoke tobacco and almost half of all adolescents are exposed to second-hand smoke in public places.

35. Well-nourished children are healthier, more resistant to disease and more likely to survive. As they grow, they are more able to learn, becoming more productive and better equipped to participate in and contribute to the life of their communities. Yet, malnutrition in all its forms remains a persistent challenge. The

estimated number of stunted children globally has declined from 170 million in 2010 to 155 million in 2016, with just over half living in Asia and over one third in Africa, where the number of stunted children is increasing.

36. While often associated with emergencies, the burden of wasting remains high in many stable contexts. In 2016, nearly 52 million children under age 5 suffered from wasting and 17 million from severe wasting. Over two thirds of children experiencing wasting lived in Asia and over a quarter in Africa. At the other end of the spectrum, 41 million children under age 5 were overweight in 2016, up from 31 million in 1990.

37. In 2016, over 3.4 million children with severe acute malnutrition accessed treatment services in 72 countries. While the number of children accessing treatment continues to increase, further work is required to scale up treatment services globally, alongside continued investments to prevent malnutrition through multisectoral, risk-informed programming.

38. Globally, millions of children continue to suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, which can lead to poor growth, delayed cognitive development, weakened immunity, disability, disease and even death. An estimated 29 per cent of children 6 to 59 months of age suffer from vitamin A deficiency in low-and middle-income settings. Furthermore, 43 per cent of preschool-age children and 29 per cent of women of reproductive age suffer from anaemia, often due to iron deficiency.

39. Improving nutrition is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and nutrition has been included in the related indicator framework. In order to address the multiple nutrition challenges, which tend to affect the most disadvantaged, the global nutrition community strives to create a more enabling environment for the scale-up of nutrition programmes. By the end of 2016, 58 countries had joined the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, which supports multisectoral and coordinated actions to scale up evidence-based, costed nutrition plans. Of the 58 countries, 49 had national multi-stakeholder platforms in place.

40. The importance of breastfeeding was reconfirmed by new evidence that the lives of some 800,000 children and 20,000 mothers can be saved every year by improving breastfeeding rates. Breastfeeding also contributes crucially to brain development and the prevention of overweight and obesity, yet only 43 per cent of infants under six months of age were breastfed exclusively in 2016.

41. Iodine deficiency is a common cause of preventable cognitive impairment. The introduction of adequately iodized salt into food chains has led to remarkable decreases in iodine deficiency worldwide. The number of countries with deficient iodine intakes has declined from 47 in 2007 to 20 in 2016. On the basis of a redefined indicator, 87 per cent of households were consuming salt with some iodine in 2016.

42. For women of childbearing age, fortifying commonly consumed cereal grains such as wheat flour, maize flour and rice is an important means to prevent birth defects and anaemia. At the end of 2016, 87 countries had legislation to mandate fortification of at least one industrially milled cereal grain. For young children, home fortification using micronutrient powders is a more targeted approach currently operating in at least 65 countries worldwide.

43. In least developed countries, 52 per cent of children receive complementary foods with adequate frequency, 29 per cent meet the criteria for the minimum dietary diversity and 16 per cent have a minimum acceptable diet. Further, only one in four of the poorest children in least developed countries are meeting the minimum requirement for dietary diversity among children from 6 to 23 months of age.

44. In 2015, 6.6 billion people used improved drinking water sources; the rate was 96 per cent in urban areas but only 84 per cent in rural areas. Less than half (42 per cent) of least developed countries have gained access to improved drinking water since 1990. In 2015, 4.9 billion people used improved sanitation facilities, and while the number of rural people not using basic sanitation has declined from 1.9 to 1.7 billion since 2000, it has increased from 580 to 700 million in urban areas. According to the 2015 child mortality report,[4] about 2,000 children die each day from diarrhoeal disease owing to a lack of access to safe drinking water, sanitation and basic hygiene.

45. The targets associated with Sustainable Development Goal 6 for universal access to drinking water and for sanitation and hygiene are ambitious, given the challenges to resource mobilization and the conditions prevailing in many countries. The June 2017 report of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation estimates that the number of people without access to water and sanitation is expected to increase in the near future. Sustainable provision of water and sanitation services will require transformational change in structural and institutional factors and strengthening of sector governance functions at national and subnational levels.

46. Ending open defecation, which was still practised by 1 billion people in 2016, and achieving universal access to basic sanitation by 2030 will require a substantial acceleration in progress, particularly in rural areas, where 9 out of 10 people who practise open defecation live. This is largely centred in Central and Southern Asia, Eastern and Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In 2016, it was estimated that girls and women collectively spend 97 billion hours annually securing a safe place to defecate. Fetching water is another challenge, especially for children and women, who globally spend a cumulative 73 billion hours fetching water annually. While hygiene behaviours have improved, the proportion of people with hand-washing facilities consisting of soap and water at home needs to be increased.

47. Early childhood development has achieved prominence since its mention in the Sustainable Development Goals, making attention to this issue fundamental to meeting the targets of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the commitment of global leaders has contributed to raising its profile, leading to a 10 per cent increase since 2014 in the number of national Governments in low- and middle-income countries that have adopted relevant policies. In the majority of these countries, programming is built around the latest neuroscience findings, which underline the strategic importance of a holistic approach towards child well-being and development, particularly in the first 1,000 days of life. Based on these findings, a shift is now under way from advocacy to policy and programme implementation.

48. Despite the progress in the field of early childhood development, findings show that 43 per cent, or about 250 million, of the world's children under age 5 in low- and middle-income countries are still at risk of not achieving their developmental potential because of extreme poverty and stunting. The economic consequences of this tragedy are borne by individuals and society in terms of poor learning, lower wages and higher unemployment, resulting in almost a 25 per cent loss in annual income per capita. Meanwhile, quality integrated early childhood development programmes are affordable, estimated to require an additional 50 cents per capita per year. The affordability outweighs the cost of inaction, especially when considering that this investment could yield a return of almost 13 per cent annually.

[4] Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, *Estimation, Levels and Trends in Child Mortality: Report 2015* (UNICEF, New York, 2015).

49. A nurturing environment is fundamental to a young child's development, which includes good quality nutrition, health care, social services, stimulation and early learning programmes. Nutrition, stimulation and protection are key elements to reduce the development gaps that often place children from the least developed countries and poorer families at a disadvantage starting out in life. Nonetheless, data show that only 13 per cent of these children aged 3 and 4 have access to such programmes.

B. Providing quality education

50. The Sustainable Development Goal for education calls for the international community to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It embodies a commitment to equity for all children, holds high expectations for learning and embraces ambitious targets for universal primary education and increased access to pre-primary and secondary education. One year into implementation of the Goals, the global education community continues to address the unfinished business of providing quality primary education to all children, while also building capacity for progress towards universal access to pre-primary and secondary education, particularly for the most marginalized children.

51. In 2016, there were 100 million more children and adolescents enrolled in primary and secondary schools than a decade ago. The primary school completion rate increased from 82 per cent in 2000 to 90 per cent in 2014. Among youth aged 15 to 24, the literacy rate improved from 83 per cent to 91 per cent between 1990 and 2015, and the gap between women and men narrowed. Gender parity has been achieved in primary completion, with girls very slightly disadvantaged (gender parity index of 0.99), and in lower secondary completion, with boys very slightly disadvantaged (gender parity index of 1.01). However, the global statistics mask continuing in-country variations and an increase in the number of countries where boys are disadvantaged.

52. However, going to school is not enough — children need to learn. An estimated 250 million primary school-age children are failing to learn basic numeracy and literacy, including the 130 million children who have reached grade 4. If current trends continue, in 2030 some 1.5 billion adults will have had no education beyond primary school, and they will come disproportionately from low-income countries and marginalized communities.

53. Education is both a right enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and a key lever for economic growth, poverty reduction, inclusion and gender equality, empowerment and health. On average, each additional year of schooling can add up to 18 per cent to a nation's gross domestic product per capita.[5] Educating girls is a particularly transformative force: half of the 1970 to 2009 reduction in under-five mortality can be traced to increases in the average years of schooling of women of reproductive age.[6] Educated people tend to be more empowered and socially more tolerant and resolution-seeking. Greater equity in education has been linked to a reduced likelihood of violent conflict. One reason for limited progress is the continued exclusion of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups from

[5] J. Crespo Cuaresma, W. Lutz and W.C. Sanderson, "Age structure, education and economic growth" (Laxenburg, Austria, International Institute For Applied Systems Analysis, October 2012), available from http://pure.iiasa.ac.at/10263/1/IR-12-011.pdf.

[6] Emmanuela Gakidou and others, "Increased educational attainment and its effect on child mortality in 175 countries between 1970 and 2009: a systematic analysis", *The Lancet*, vol. 376, No. 9745 (18 September 2010), pp. 959-974.

education and learning, starting in early childhood. Progress will not be possible without specific efforts towards increased inclusion.

54. Recent reports show that pre-primary education is among the most effective practices in improving education outcomes, leading to better learning outcomes in the long run and improving education system efficiency.[7] Today, nearly two thirds more children are enrolled in early childhood education than in 1999. Yet in many countries, the subsector is still extremely underfunded and in its earliest stages of development. Children from the poorest households are almost six times less likely to attend an early childhood education programme than those from the richest. The majority of low-income countries allocate less than 2 per cent of public education budgets to pre-primary education and are not adequately equipped to implement scale-up. Early learning may be the subsector with the largest gap between evidence and practice, and there is a great need to ground the subsector in the latest developments in cognitive neuroscience, with sound policies and coordination.

55. In the past three years, the number of children enrolled in primary school has increased by 18.5 million. Despite progress, 121 million children of primary and lower-secondary school age are out of school worldwide, and this figure rises to about 263 million when children of upper-secondary school age are included. The stagnation in the absolute number is largely attributable to the increase of school-age populations. This challenge is most severe in the Eastern and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa regions, where the school-age populations are projected to more than double by 2030. Further, of the 61 million children of primary school age out of school, approximately 26 million will never enter school, 23 million will enter late and 12 million have already left school.

56. Only 39 per cent of countries have a rate below 5 per cent of out-of-school children of secondary school age. While in most countries, children living in poverty are most likely to be out of school, other factors of exclusion include ethnicity, gender, location and child labour. In addition, despite a paucity of data in this area, existing evidence suggests that disability is also a major factor of exclusion. Today's refugee crisis creates new challenges to reaching those most in need of support, including adolescents. Globally, 142 million adolescents of upper-secondary school age are not in school. One challenge in increasing access to education for children in humanitarian, migrant or refugee situations is the pressure to expand education systems rapidly within existing resource constraints.

57. Almost 40 per cent of children of primary school age are not learning the basics of reading and mathematics.[8] These numbers show that significant growth in enrolment since 2000 has not been matched by quality and learning outcomes. Children from disadvantaged regions of poor countries are lagging even further behind.

58. Teachers have a big impact on children's learning, but in many countries, there is a continuing shortage of well-trained, motivated and supported teachers. The report of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity[7] calls for investment in the education workforce to reimagine its potential for the future. Demand for teachers in low-income countries will nearly double by 2030. Innovation will be essential to meet this demand while taking advantage of the opportunity to reinvigorate the teaching force with a new focus on learning excellence.

[7] International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, "The learning generation: investing in education for a changing world" (2016).

[8] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/2014* (Paris, 2014).

59. Girls remain disadvantaged in a significant number of countries, and boys are disadvantaged in an increasing number of countries. Positive trends in girls' education, such as increasing primary completion rates and lower-secondary enrolment, have not yet benefited all girls, and significant proportions of secondary-age girls have never been in school or remain far from accessing lower-secondary education. In most sub-Saharan African countries, for example, girls from the poorest households remain most disadvantaged in terms of school participation. If current trends continue, these girls are not expected to achieve universal lower-secondary completion until year 2111. Poverty and location often combine with gender to create deep inequalities within countries, even where parity at the national level is close to being achieved. Strategies to address gender inequities are context-specific, but might include reducing the costs of education, for example through cash transfers, reducing the distance to school, tackling gender-based violence within and around schools and working with communities to support girls' access and retention.

60. While the available data regarding children with disabilities are incomplete and of poor quality, there is evidence that these children make up one of the most marginalized groups and are commonly excluded from education opportunities. Global estimates suggest that approximately 5 per cent of children in any country will have a severe or moderate disability or learning difficulty, but education-management information systems in low- and middle-income countries rarely collect reliable data on children with disabilities.

61. A major recent development is the increased number of children being schooled in emergency contexts. For example, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East supported more than 45,000 Palestine refugee students in the Syrian Arab Republic through a network of 101 schools and provided support to more than 1,800 teachers. There are a number of challenges for educating children in emergency settings, including low and unpredictable levels of funding for education in crisis situations; weak coordination; and stretched capacities to efficiently respond to education emergencies. To address some of these challenges, the Education Cannot Wait fund is mobilizing resources for investments to ensure that all children, especially those living in emergencies and protracted crises, continue to learn.

62. Funding, whether from domestic or external sources, is insufficient for education in developing countries. Only 21 per cent of low- and middle-income countries devote at least 20 per cent of government expenditure to education. In the least favourable country context, it has been estimated that the poorest children benefit from 18 times less public education financing than the wealthiest.

63. Critical to addressing these challenges are strong and responsive education systems, including evidence-based national education sector plans. There have always been many challenges to education but the increased focus on learning outcomes means that strong systems are ever more important, including at the decentralized level, where schools and districts will need to take much more responsibility for improving learning outcomes. This requires empowerment, financing and training. Successful education systems are those that provide good-quality learning for all students. Support for adolescents must connect back to the early years, before disadvantaged children leave the education system.

C. Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence

64. Considerable progress has been made in the area of child protection. In 2016, the births of more than 12.3 million children were registered in 70 countries, and

131 countries reported registration systems that are free, universal and continuous. In 2016, almost 1.9 million children were registered in alternative care across programme countries, a 20 per cent increase since 2014. In the same year, corporal punishment of children was prohibited in schools in 128 countries, one more than in 2015.

65. More than 7.5 million children at risk were prevented from engaging in and/or were withdrawn from child labour in 52 countries, up from 5.6 million children in 2015. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations plays a leading role in sustainably preventing and reducing child labour in agriculture. It does this by providing technical support for the development of policies and guidelines and enhancement of cooperation between national ministries of labour and agriculture. Countries such as Cambodia, Lebanon, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania are increasingly addressing child labour as an integral part of national agricultural policies and programmes.

66. The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage has reached more than 1 million girls through support for life skills and school attendance and engaged 1.6 million individuals in dialogue to support adolescent girls. In 2016, the UNICEF-UNFPA Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change reached almost 8.5 million people across 17 countries. Close to 3,000 communities declared the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting in 2016, compared with 2,000 communities in 2015. Prevalence has fallen significantly among younger women and girls in the three highest female genital mutilation-prevalent countries with available data.

67. In terms of strengthening capacity to tackle online sexual exploitation during 2016, eight national policies or action plans were adopted and legislative reform is under way in 10 countries. Seventy countries have also joined a global commitment to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation online. The UNICEF global programme to strengthen capacity to tackle online child sexual exploitation has reached 13 million people through awareness-raising campaigns, while 60,000 children, parents and teachers and more than 1,000 law enforcement and judicial officers, 2,000 service providers and 1,000 industry representatives were provided with training and information.

68. Support to child protection was provided by UNICEF in 132 countries through development or implementation of legislation, policies and standards, alongside strengthening of direct service provision. Increasingly, the focus is on building cross-sectoral linkages with health and education and social protection. At least 43 countries reported having child protection legislation consistent with or better than international standards, an increase of eight from 2015. There was a 20 per cent increase in the number of countries reporting compliance of their justice systems with the minimum standards set in the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice.

69. During 2016, psychosocial interventions aided about 2.9 million girls and boys in 68 countries, including through the provision of child-friendly spaces and community- and school-based interventions. In 2016, nearly 4.6 million women and children in humanitarian situations across 53 countries received assistance from UNICEF to address a range of safety and protection issues related to gender-based violence. Some 3.9 million girls and boys received mine-risk education in 22 countries and territories — an increase of almost 40 per cent from previous years, owing mainly to work in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. UNICEF and partners invested significant efforts to support unaccompanied and separated children during 2016, resulting in 32,905 children receiving appropriate alternative-care arrangements and 21,994 being reunified with families and caregivers. Around

21,400 children were released from armed forces or groups, a twofold increase compared to 2015. Around 53 per cent of children were reintegrated with their families and communities, and 59 per cent received assistance.

70. Concerning the migration movements to Europe, with a large influx of child refugees, UNICEF supported European authorities in accommodating migrant and refugee children and ensuring respect for their rights. In 2016, in five countries, 95,997 children were reached with emotional and psychosocial support, family-reunification services and recreational and basic education activities. A further 12,624 children at risk were referred to specialized care and services.

71. UNICEF continues to support the ongoing implementation of action plans to prevent and end grave violations against children in armed conflict, with all seven remaining Governments involved in the Children, Not Soldiers campaign having signed action plans. In addition, the grave violation of abduction was established as a "trigger" violation through Security Council resolution 2225 (2015).

D. Combating HIV and AIDS

72. The scale-up of prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV is one of the greatest public health achievements of recent times, averting 1.6 million new infections among children under 15 years of age since 2000. Services are increasingly integrated, new ways of delivering those services have been introduced and antiretroviral regimens to prevent children from acquiring HIV and to support maternal health have improved. In 2016, Armenia, Belarus and Thailand joined Cuba to receive the WHO certification for elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and several other countries are on track to achieve this endorsement within a few years. From 2005 to 2015, there was a 60 per cent decline in new HIV infections among children, from 270,000 in 2009 to 110,000, among the 21 countries in sub-Saharan Africa that were part of the Global Plan towards the Elimination of New HIV Infections among Children by 2015 and Keeping Their Mothers Alive. In 2015, of the estimated 1.4 million women who were pregnant and living with HIV, more than 1 million received the most-effective regimens of antiretroviral medications, with an estimated 79 per cent coverage in sub-Saharan Africa.

73. However, notable gaps continue to exist. An estimated 150,000 children below 15 years of age were newly infected with HIV in 2015, nearly 85 per cent of them living in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of these infections occurred during breastfeeding. The shift in the timing of HIV transmission from mother to child has created a new urgency for focusing on adherence to medicinal regimes and retaining mothers and infants to the end of the breastfeeding period. Furthermore, half of the 1.8 million children under 15 years of age living with HIV did not receive treatment in 2015, and when they did gain access, it often came too late, with the average age of treatment initiation at three and a half years in sub-Saharan Africa.

74. Progress in preventing new infections among adolescents has been unacceptably slow, and projections indicate that current efforts would not decrease HIV incidence among adolescents even if the rate of new HIV infections among adolescents stalled at 250,000 cases between now and 2021. The disproportionate impact among key populations is underscored by estimates indicating that almost one third of all new infections among adolescents 15 to 19 years of age occurred outside sub-Saharan Africa.

75. In 2015, there were still more than 13 million children who had lost one or both parents to AIDS. Remarkable gains, however, have been made in mitigating the economic and social impact of HIV and AIDS on children and families over the past

decade. Evaluations of national social-protection programmes have established that social protection, in particular cash transfers, contribute to improving access to health, education and nutrition, strengthening social networks, increasing access to HIV and AIDS treatment and prevention and reducing adolescent vulnerability and risk-taking.

76. The current state of the AIDS response calls for innovation in implementation, dissemination and optimization, using lessons learned as the basis to refine new action. The work must extend across development sectors and must also engage with non-traditional actors who meet the needs of children, adolescents and their families where they are, throughout their lives. Ending AIDS requires addressing the social and economic factors that continue to fuel the AIDS epidemic. Poverty, food insecurity, drug and alcohol use, social marginalization, exclusion, stigma, inequity, gender inequality, violence and sexual exploitation all increase risk and decrease resilience in vulnerable populations. Social protection and the protection, care and support of children must underpin multisectoral efforts to scale up high-impact interventions through the first two decades of life.

IV. Ways forward

77. The world is changing quickly, and so too are the threats and challenges facing its children. Yet children's rights remain the same; they are immutable, indivisible and universal. To meet these challenges and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, partners must be sufficiently nimble and adaptable to respond to the changing dynamics. Responding effectively to the 2030 Agenda will require important shifts in what Governments and partners do and how they work. It will be necessary to pursue strategic partnerships across the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society to respond in an integrated way to other challenges to child well-being highlighted by the Agenda, including climate change, urbanization, displacement, the demographic transition and growing challenges in the second decade of life.

78. The fifteenth anniversary of "A world fit for children", following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and other major global agreements, presents an opportunity to take stock and review ways in which efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda can pay particular attention to reducing inequality among children. Despite the uncertain outlook, the potential for transformative change has never been greater. The world has a new commitment, and increasingly the knowledge and means, to overcome critical obstacles that prevent children from realizing their potential and their rights. Without ambitious action on sustainable development, humanitarian assistance and climate change, the promise of progress brought about by new agreements risks becoming a tragedy for the world's youngest citizens. And to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, we must reach the most disadvantaged children.